

# The Faith of a Modern Christian

*Papers by the  
Theological  
Seventeen*



COLUMBUS, OHIO

1922

11.7.23.

**LIBRARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**PRINCETON, N. J.**

BR 50 .F3 1922

The Faith of a modern  
Christian

✓

# The Faith of a Modern Christian

---

---

Papers by the Theological Seventeen



*“Behold Him now where He comes!  
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,  
But the Lord of our hearts, of our homes,  
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;  
The brother of want and blame,  
The lover of women and men,  
With a love that puts to shame  
All the passions of mortal ken.*

*“Ah, no, thou life of the heart,  
Never shalt thou depart,  
Not till the leaven of God  
Shall lighten each human clod;  
Not till the world shall climb  
To thy heights serene, sublime,  
Shall the Christ who enters our door  
Pass to return no more.”*

—Richard Watson Gilder, *The Passing of Christ.*

---

---

STONEMAN PRESS  
COLUMBUS, OHIO  
1922



Copyright 1922

by

STONEMAN PRESS  
Columbus, Ohio

## A F O R E W O R D

The Theological Seventeen is a group of pastors of different denominations bound together into a fellowship. It has never become a highly organized club with rules, by-laws and red tape. It has always possessed an intangible and vital quality of spirit rather than of form.

From the beginning it has attracted men of a definite quality and of a distinctive faith. Its members have been men of religious conviction; dominated and controlled by Christian principles and ideals, who have consecrated their lives to the Christian ministry. These men have, also, won through to a definite interpretation of the supreme realities of life—they have believed in the progressive nature of revelation and in the social feature of redemption. They have felt that science is not in conflict with religion, and they have become convinced that religion has a social as well as an individual message.

Since the outset the meetings of this fellowship have combined social and instructional features. There have always been moments of relaxation, of play and laughter, of friendliness finding new treasures of companionship. At the meetings, papers have been read on topics educational, economic, or theological, and a free and friendly discussion has followed. In this simple manner the members have experienced a ripening of friendship and a deepening of faith.

The fellowship has always had beside its qualitative test for membership, a maximum limit to its membership. And in these two elements is found the secret of its name. It is the Seventeen, not because there are or ever have been seventeen members, but because

that is the arbitrary limit set to its membership. It is the Theological Seventeen, not because its members claim to be theologians of distinction or authority, but because they are interested in theology, hold that it has a message for this modern world, and that the truth which it upholds will free a world enchained by old concepts, half-truths, and new fancies.

Last spring the Theological Seventeen held an Institute of Religion. It felt that the truth which it had gained through exchange of ideas should be shared with others. It even dared to believe that what had become a supreme value to each member, should be given a wider circulation and would be of worth to many. With that conviction in mind a program of religious significance was outlined, papers of half-hour length were prepared, and the public in the City of Columbus was invited to come.

This pamphlet is that Institute of Religion visualized, and carries to a larger public the faith and the friendliness of that fellowship, known as the Theological Seventeen. It is our humble contribution to the age-long quest after Truth. It is also our high conviction that it comprises within its small compass something of the truth which will make men free.

—E. F. C.

# CONTENTS

---

	Page
Foreword .....	3
E. F. Chauncey	
Introduction .....	7
Charles Foster Kent	
An Outline Statement of the Faith for Today.....	9
Burt D. Evans	
Modern Science and Christian Faith .....	21
Joseph A. Leighton	
The Christian Idea of God .....	31
Irving Maurer	
The New Testament .....	39
E. F. Chauncey	
The Old Testament .....	50
Charles B. Ketcham	
The Christian Idea of Christ .....	65
Walter E. Burnett	
The Christian Idea of Man .....	81
Edwin A. Ralph	
The Christian Idea of Salvation .....	90
Gilbert S. Cox	
The Christian Idea of Prayer .....	105
Sidney E. Sweet	
The Christian Idea of the Church .....	116
Harold Cooper	
Internationalism .....	130
Oliver C. Weist	





## INTRODUCTION

PERIODS of upheaval, like the present, are not without their ultimate values. They compel thoughtful men to test and redefine the faith that is within them. They reveal the need of a religious philosophy of life that is equal to every strain and stress. They are also rapidly dispelling the apathy regarding religion that had settled like a pall upon large groups of men.

The new born interest in religion is expressing itself in widely divergent forms. A period of upheaval is usually a period of reaction. Many, as in the days of Manasseh, are crying "Back to the old Gods." "Down with the prophets who would interpret religion in terms of life and deeds." Fortunately for the courageous men who uttered the addresses contained in this volume, the custom of killing the prophets is no longer in vogue; but the spirit reflected in certain public utterances and articles directed against them grimly recall the days of the Inquisition. One newspaper in the city in which the addresses were delivered, in its editorial column, refused to publish these attacks because they were so bitter.

On the other hand thoughtful men and women of the city responded in large numbers. Many gained a new conception of the religion of Christ and have, as a result, actively identified themselves with the building of the Kingdom. They are but a section of that vast army of forward-looking men and women who crave a simple, sane, spiritual interpretation of religion that will be in harmony with established results of science and with their own experience. Moreover, such inter-

pretation alone will satisfy the demand of Twentieth Century youth. If their faith and morals are to survive this period of upheaval, they must speedily be helped to find it.

These addresses are well fitted to satisfy the deepest needs of the present age. They are the outgrowth of genuine spiritual experience. They are the fruits of fearless but constructive thinking. Here many will find convincing reasons for the faith that is within them. They are the worthy expression of that new evangelism which aims to set forth in the language of today the eternal and ever-satisfying message of the Master and to carry that message into life.

CHARLES FOSTER KENT,  
*Yale University.*

# OUTLINE STATEMENT OF THE FAITH FOR TODAY

BURT DAVID EVANS

IN THE REALM of religious thought nothing is more apparent than the universal recognition of the necessity for a restatement of the Faith of Christendom. In this respect two things are conceded to be true: namely,—the inadequacy of the older presentation of what has been termed the essentials of Christianity, and the urgent demand that there be formulated such a deliverance of Christian truth as will express not only the fundamental facts of man's being, but will also furnish an adequate foundation for a stable civilization.

In a recent volume entitled, "The Reconstruction of Religion" Professor Charles Ellwood says, "A crisis confronts religion in the modern world. A new Reformation is necessary within the Christian Church if it is to survive, besides which the Protestant Reformation will seem insignificant. Like all our other institutions, religion is in revolution. Either some new form of Christianity or sheer atheism will soon become dominant in the more advanced nations, with scientific agnostic positivism as a third possibility. A fourth possibility, of course, is that our whole civilization may revert to a lower level, and that the older and cruder forms of religion may again appear and become common." That statement is not the pessimistic utterance of a superficial thinker, rather, it is the sober judgment of a leading American scholar who

is not only in the fullest touch with the world situation, but is also competent to weigh the problem and render a sane judgment concerning the same.

It should be added, however, that the difficulties confronting the present age are not insurmountable. If met in an honest and sincere spirit they may be overcome and the human race, instead of retrograding, may reach the higher attainments in ethical and spiritual progress. Therefore, we come with a plea for a more rational and spiritual expression of the Christian Faith. In the discussions presented we are only secondarily concerned as to whether this reconstruction will strengthen the various forms of organized or institutional Christianity. That may follow, but the real and vital concern is that it shall bring humanity a truer conception of the meaning of life and of its relations to the unfolding purposes of an Infinite God. This transition will not affect real religion; religion is natural to man, he does not need a priest or a miracle to create it. Its extinction would require a miracle, for in that event man would become dehumanized and lose his divine heritage. Religion today is moving out into the open; it is including humanity as well as divinity in its analysis and its synthesis. That is the fact on which we base our fundamental appeal. It might be well, however, for us to note the fact that the great difference between the reconstruction that is coming and the previous landmarks in religious thinking lie in the difference in the method of approach. In our search for the spirit of Jesus we are moving away from the proof and the methods of proof furnished by the ecclesiastics of the past thousand years. The present generation

is approaching the problem from a different angle; it is endeavoring to include the various facts of man's being and development. This implies that not the future but the present is the crux of the question, and that this question includes everything that pertains to man's highest welfare and possible destiny.

Therefore in our attempts to assist in the reconstruction of Faith we build upon the validity of the theory of Evolution. We act upon the supposition that the newer scientific view is more nearly correct. We throw overboard the teaching that four to six thousand years of history will take us back to a mythical Garden of Eden with a future that ends before a Great White Throne. "That seems like a fairy tale to us and not a very moral one at that. It does not satisfy us and there is no use pretending that it does." Those words express our views and we accept, therefore, the more satisfactory teaching of Theistic Evolution which begins with the vision of an Infinite Personal Creative Energy sweeping out into the records of time and the confines of space. It brings us the welcome message of God as man's Father leading His children through the mists of ignorance and the almost defeated struggles of the ages toward the realization of the highest ideals of humankind. We are enabled to believe thereby that "Our world is not hopelessly decayed, doomed to utter destruction in the course of a few days or years. It is vigorous with the splendid strength of youth. Back of us stretch the uncounted ages during which star dust has gathered together and organized the marvellous symphony of form and motion. Little by little our planet was prepared for the life which began its won-

derful course of evolution. Today we see man just emerging from helpless infancy into a real consciousness of his powers; and before the human race stretch millions and millions of years in which progress may be made." Religion shares this cosmic movement, it is not closed and final, but, with everything else in the created universe, is evolving. Consequently, that which satisfied the worshiper of yesterday is not sufficient for the growing spirit of man. The very logic of events compels us to accept a theory that is inclusive enough for the demands of a being created in the image of the living God.

In the presentation of this Outline of Faith it is necessary that we differentiate between the essentials and the non-essentials of the Christian religion. While the Church looks unto Jesus as the author and the finisher of her faith, it is true that the Church has embodied in the expression of that faith many things that Jesus never taught; at least, there is no evidence that He taught them; on the other hand, organized Christianity has neglected many truths upon which He placed the greatest emphasis. Among these non-essentials we include the following: the teaching of the Virgin Birth of Christ, which has insufficient evidence to support it; miracles, which Jesus always discounted; the idea of an infallible Book as the supreme court of appeal in matters of faith and practice. Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures, imagining you possess eternal life in their pages—and they do testify of me—but you refuse to come to me for life." The various Sacraments of the Church, well enough in their place but the new age will relegate them to a position of secondary importance.

The essentials upon which we base our Outline of Faith are the three outstanding facts of Christian revelation: namely,—the fact of God, the fact of Jesus Christ, and the fact of the Kingdom of God. Beyond those truths we cannot go; we believe that in them we have all that is necessary for the salvation of man and the redemption of the race.

## I. THE FACT OF GOD.

In his volume entitled "The Idea of God," Prof. John Fiske gives us his early, childish view of God, "I remember distinctly the conception which I had formed when five years of age. I imagined a narrow office just over the zenith, with a tall, standing desk running lengthwise, upon which lay several open ledgers bound in coarse leather. There was no roof over this office, and the walls rose scarcely five feet from the floor, so that a person standing at the desk could look out upon the whole world. There were two persons at the desk, and one of them—a tall, slender man, of aquiline features, wearing spectacles, with a pen in his hand and another behind his ear—was God. The other, whose appearance I do not distinctly recall, was an attendant angel. Both were diligently watching the deeds of men and recording them in ledgers. To my infant mind this picture was not grotesque, but ineffably solemn, and the fact that all my words and acts were thus written down, to confront me at the day of judgment, seemed naturally a matter of grave concern."

"If we could cross question all the men and women we know, and still more all the children, we should

probably find that, even in this enlightened age, the conception of Deity running throughout the civilized world contains much that is in the crudest sense anthropomorphic."

In the Faith of today we shall come more and more to think of God as a Divine Eternal Energy manifesting Himself in terms of human thought and action. We shall regard Him as the immanent co-worker always toiling with His children rather than as a sovereign to whom they are subject.

"We still say, 'In the beginning God'; and we declare over against the world as the only answer to its riddle, 'God created the heavens and the earth.' But how different our picture is! The world is in the making. Not six days, but endless ages give the story of its creation. And God does not stand outside the world as its carpenter, but moves in it as its shaping and informing life. 'Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things.' The whirling electron infinitely small moves in Him. The circling worlds are His deed. The prayer that rises in us is the gift of His life. This is the new world that we can only understand by the doctrine of His presence.

'Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush aflame with God.'

Day by day His presence creates this world anew. Day by day His shaping power leads it on toward its goal." In this view of the immanent God leading His children out of animalism into saintliness of character



we have a conception of Deity that makes life, not an accident meaningless in the scheme of things, but the expression of a divine purpose manifesting itself in fashioning a perfect humanity. This implies that all truth is sacred and divine. Whenever we discover a new truth, whether in astronomy, or chemistry, or electricity, or wireless telegraphy, we discover another eternal thought of God. All science is religious at heart. There is no conflict between science and religion; the more science, the more religion; the more religion, the more science. Every man who adds to useful knowledge is a theologian and preaches the Christian religion.

## II. THE FACT OF CHRIST.

In the presentation of the personality of Jesus, doubtless we have much that is mythical and legendary. At times we have emphasized His divinity; again, we lay great stress on His humanity. But why separate Jesus from the evolutionary processes of the revelation of an Immanent God? Jesus is the Master of life; He is the crown of creation, therefore, He is manhood at its best; humanity filled with the fulness of God. We regard it impossible to satisfactorily interpret the life and the teachings of Jesus from any other standpoint. It is difficult for us to see that He had other than a human soul, intellect and will, and that His human soul did not have a pre-existence. That which pre-existed was the Logos; the divine Logos is the element of Christ's nature which is one with the Eternal Father. It was thus that Jesus was the Word made flesh and it was from His consciousness of likeness to the Eternal One that enabled Him to say: "I

and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

In His relation to man, Jesus Christ expresses the ultimate human manifestation of divine and spiritual values. The Christ life is God's method of making men. Eventually manhood and Christianity must become synonymous in meaning. The whole process meant Jesus from the beginning. He is the head of the human race and the human race is the head of creation. At the heart of the universe and upon its central throne is Jesus Christ. Upon every part of it He has stamped the seal of His power and wisdom. Nothing in the created universe or in the soul of man is known aright until His name is read. Separate and apart from the divine Word life has no meaning and human existence no solution. But with that Word we have the revelation of the Infinite and the story of His love.

### III. THE FACT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The present day message of the supremacy of the Kingdom flows naturally and necessarily out of the truth of the Divine Immanence and the revelation of the Word. That Kingdom is the crown, the climax of creation and partakes of the distinctive features of the processes which have preceded. In a recent article Dr. Frederick Shannon has said "The Kingdom of God did not begin with time, or history, or the Bible. It is as much older and greater than these as the universe is older and greater than the comparatively youthful planet on which we live. For the Kingdom of God is primarily of the heavens

and the eternities. No seer first foresaw it; no prophet first foretold it; no poet first visualized it. It began first in the heart of God; it is the irruption of God into humanity and history." The thought of an immanent God working throughout the eternities and in the centuries toward the establishment of that Kingdom furnishes hope and idealism for the human race. It is not to be wondered at that Jesus made the message of the Kingdom the key-note of His ministry. It was the message that was continually upon His lips; Jesus made very little reference to the Church as an institution but He was ever preaching the Kingdom. The establishment of that final achievement of the human race absorbed His interests and consumed His energies. His life, teachings, death, and resurrection find their meaning in their relation to this supreme purpose of the living Christ.

It is encouraging to note that the followers of Jesus are returning to this central thought of the Master. Business, art, commerce, literature, education, in fact all forms of human thought and action, have to do with that Kingdom and find their real significance in relation thereto. With the fact of the Kingdom are two correlated truths. The first is that of sin, the second that of salvation.

In our efforts to arrive at a clear understanding of the spirit and the teaching of the Master we cannot fail to note His description of and His attitude toward sin. Jesus announced the purpose of His coming in the words, "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." Anything that interfered with the fullness of life He regarded as sin. The

Greek word *hamartia* we translate sin. It means missing the mark. Failure to achieve the divine manhood is sinful. Our Lord manifested manhood in its fullness and declared that sin blasts the nobler powers of the human soul and drives man from the Father's house and the Father's love.

The apostle Paul made sin an intellectual abstraction, a theological concept. He regarded man as in universal bondage brought upon the race by the fall of the first man. Dante, Milton, Angelo and others have embodied that teaching in art and literature and for more than one thousand years we have been proclaiming the fact of sin from the standpoint of those teachers rather than from the position of the Great Teacher. Now we are approaching the interpretation that would bring us into closer harmony with the ideas of our Redeemer and we shall see sin as a force blasting and blunting the higher powers of the human soul.

The second correlated truth is that of salvation. The battles of the ages have been waged over the meaning of that word. The preponderance of modern thinking, however, regards salvation as a process to be achieved. It is not something done for man on the outside, but it is something done with man on the inside. We are not so much saved as we are in the process of being saved. Furthermore, the salvation that God recognizes and that Jesus taught is social salvation. Separate and apart from social redemption there is no individual salvation. The fruits of the spirit that characterize salvation are supremely social qualities. Salvation is a by-product of the program of the Kingdom of God. The individual who gives himself to the control of the forces making for that

Kingdom thereby finds salvation. "He that seeketh to save his soul shall lose it, and he that loseth his soul for my sake shall find it."

In this Outline of Faith for Today I have assumed the present fact of eternal values. Faith, Hope, Love these endure; that is, they have lasting qualities. To build life into the Kingdom is to be immortal. To put into life the fundamental laws of that Kingdom, as those laws are expressed in the personality of Jesus, is to build into the eternal order. The spirit of Jesus manifest in terms of human living is conqueror of death and the grave. There is one life and one world; we are eternal here and now or we never shall be. That eternal life has to do with the transaction of business, the teaching of school, the mining of coal, the running of street cars, the practice of the physician, the making of treaties and the organization of the human race into one brotherhood. The Kingdom is here, we do not have to go elsewhere to find it. But, are we big enough and brave enough to enter into it?

And so the essentials of our Faith are not many; they are plain and simple. The fact of God as man's Father; the fact of Christ as man's Redeemer; the fact of the Kingdom into which we may build the program of life; these are essential and these only. The men and the women who are greeting the dawning of the New Day are fashioning civilization according to the heavenly program and molding the thinking of the human race according to the teachings of our Christ as those teachings are indicated in the real and outstanding truths of His word.



## RELIGION AND THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

JOSEPH A. LEIGHTON

St. John 4/21, 23, 24.—the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. \* \* the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth.\*\* God is a Spirit.

ON WHAT TERMS can Religion and Science keep house together? This problem has been brought to the forefront by the discussion over Evolution and Religion stirred up recently by Mr. Bryan. Many, perhaps most representatives of the Christian church are ready to go part way with the scientific spirit. They accept the doctrine of evolution and claim to accept the scientific spirit. But many of them are not willing to go the whole way and accept *all* the consequences of the scientific spirit.

What is the Scientific Spirit? Essentially it means that there is an orderly sequence in the events of nature and of human nature. It means that everything that happens is the consequence of antecedent natural conditions. It means that the events which have taken place in the past, no matter where and when, were the consequences of the operation of forces similar in kind to those which can be observed to be operating here and now; and that future events will be the consequences of the present constellation of events. The Scientific Spirit involves the rejection of extramundane interventions in the order of physical nature and of history. It involves the denial of the belief in a God who is an external and transcendent artificer who occasionally intervenes in an extraordinary fashion at critical postures of affairs in this world; but ordinarily

is sitting outside of it busying Himself with His own private affairs. The only conception of God that can live at peace with the scientific spirit is that He is the ever-indwelling ever-energizing Creative Cosmic Spirit who reaches His richest concrete manifestation in finite form in the spirit of man at his best,—in short, an immanent and dynamic God. If God cannot be discerned as present in nature and especially in human life today then there is no good reason to assert that He was present at the creation 4004 B. C., at the beginning of the solar systems several untold quadrillions of years ago, or even in Judea about 1900 years ago. The Scientific Spirit cannot admit that, on a few occasions, or even only once upon a time, the natural order of events was suspended or overruled to admit the inrush of some so-called higher, but unknown order. It cannot admit that the course of human history was cleft asunder and an extraneous and miraculous portent intruded into the cleft. We have heard much about “the fullness of time,” and, without doubt, just as there are Spring days when, under the genial sun, there is a sudden outburst of the hitherto slowly maturing leaf and flower, so there are *creative moments* in history as in the individual life. But these creative moments are the critical manifestations of slowly accumulating forces, hitherto unmarked.

To be specific—Jesus, the prophet and healer of Nazareth, the friend of His fellows and the founder of a new spiritual order was, both physically and spiritually, the son of His race and culture, the child of His time. Every great creative historic personage is the child of his time—is a marvellous concentration of the slowly maturing spiritual forces of the race.



Such were Plato and Phidias, Shakespeare and Newton, Goethe and Darwin.

The conception of Jesus was transformed after His death—first into a God of the heathen mystery-religions and then into the mere seeming of a man, in which the pre-existent and eternal Logos of Greek philosophy appeared disguised. His human personality, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, became a mere veil to hide a non-human Deity who could neither joy nor suffer as man, be neither tempted nor triumphant, love nor be angry, despair nor conquer through submission and faithful endurance.

Religion, if it is to live with the Scientific Spirit, must abandon all claims to account by miraculous intervention for the origin and course of physical or historical events. It must give up all entangling alliances with the science of the fourth, the thirteenth, or any other century. It must cease to claim authentication from supposed past historical events of a miraculous nature. To invoke God as its cause explains scientifically no event in nature or history. For if God be really God, if He be the Infinite Immanent Spirit, then, since He is the ultimate ground of all events, He is not the scientific explanation of any event in particular. Moreover the fullness of time is *here and now*, wherever human beings are alive. If God is not present and acting here and now, why should we suppose Him to have been active somewhere else at some other time. Surely we need the everlasting arms as much as any Jew or Greek father or medieaval monk.

What then is the place of religion? Has it any place? If so how shall we know it? You see a beautiful picture. Suppose an expert should prove that we were all

mistaken as to who was the artist, when and where it was painted and what the chemical constitution of the pigment and the canvas were? Would that affect our appreciation of the beauty and meaning of the picture? Not in the least. You have listened to a noble oratorio. Your spirits have been calmed, sweetened, uplifted. Suppose we learn tomorrow that our accepted theories of sound and musical perception were wrong. Nevertheless, the beauty of the music would not be in the least affected. Suppose you were told that the literal belief in a Messiah was an illusion, as indeed Jesus seems to have told His countrymen, need that detract from the spiritual value to you today and here of that spiritual music which has brought healing to your souls? Not at all.

The physiologist and the chemist will give you a more or less plausible account of the chemical constitution of your child, your friend, your sweetheart. But if he gravely tells you that they are nothing but chemical complexes, have no soul, do not feel or think; are, in short, mere simulacra that cannot love, and rejoice, you regard him as an impertinent pretender to omniscience. Let him believe that of his own child, friend or sweetheart, if he wishes. You know better in regard to your own beloved ones.

No account of the mechanism of the printed book, of its physical materials and the manner in which it is produced, affects in any way the beauty, the meaning and imperishable value of the poems or drama conveyed by printed symbols from one soul to another. When the lover of nature feels "a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused whose dwelling is the light of setting suns" or the majestic snow-clad

peaks or the smiling vale of the winding stream, the geologist's account of the structure and origin of the nature he loves in no way proves that the nature lover is wrong. A primrose by the river's brim may give thoughts too deep for tears, regardless of its botanical relations. There is a mystic sense by which we feel the presence of another *soul*, or *spirit*, in our fellows and in nature. There an intuition of life and meaning in the face of a friend, of another human being, yes even of a crowd, to which the abstractions and theories of science are irrelevant.

The *human values* of life, of beauty and comradeship, of friendship and human love, of integrity and freedom in the enjoyment of personality, of the quest for beauty and for truth, of the joy of fellowship in truth and in art, and of that simple human *camaraderie* of which our American mystic Walt Whitman makes so much—all these *human values stand on their own good rights*, no matter what their physical and historical conditions of origin may have been. Beyond the reach of the scientific world of description, of causal explanation, is the human world of appreciation, of the realm of personal life and its reactions to its surrounding realm of nature.

When we view the spectacle of human nature, and enter into it in sympathetic feeling and thought, we see that it is in what it yields of simple joy and heroic endurance, of fealty, love and fellowship, of beauty and rational meaning, that the world gains divinity. Here is God deep in the general heart of man. He that loveth his fellows, he that loveth truth, integrity and beauty, and comradeship in the things of the mind and heart, is born of God and knoweth God. The Kingdom

of God is the realm of all things spiritual—the realm of all that ministers to the growth in free spiritual life of the human soul. Humanity is the glory of God.

Thus we reach the foundation of religion—in the sense of the presence to us, and in ourselves and all men, of that Cosmic Creative Life, which is our Father; which encompasses us and supports us all. In it we live and move and have our being. We know this Divine life in the undying aspiration of the human spirit. It lives in all beauty, in all knowledge, in all freedom and integrity and comradeship of spirits. We see the Father of Spirits in the faces of child and friend and lover, in knowledge and freedom and loyalty to whatsoever things are born of the Spirit. For God is the Spirit of spirits. He is greater than any human soul, or than all human souls, since this human realm is but a small part, howbeit a worthwhile part, of the universe of spirits.

Religion is the *concentration*, the *focussing*, of this *life of human values into a unity*; and the faith that the deepest and truest human values are legitimate offspring of the cosmos, is the heart of religion. The function of the Christian Church is simply to be the power house, the central station, where the highest human values are unified and intensified and made more accessible to men. The function of the church is to minister as the home, in the community, of the values of life. God knows the world needs centers of this sort, if they were only alive to their missions—to make beauty and joy and fellowship and freedom accessible to all. The world has gone wrong, and is giving its organized energies chiefly to the production and accumulation of *things* material. It is the function of

the church, in the name of its Master, to stand and challenge our materialistic, machine-ridden society, a society cursed with the headlong pursuit of wealth and material power, with the feverish quantity production of ugly things and the stunting of the souls of men—for profit. The church must ask—what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? If it would be loyal to its Lord it must sternly challenge civilization with this query. It was because Jesus fought the good fight for the soul of man, for the simple and universal human values, that we identify Him rightly not only with the Christian religion, but with *universal religion*. He came that we might live and have it more abundantly. For Him to be a Son of God in very truth meant to be a full and true human being. He came as the *liberator of the soul, of human personality from the bondage of things*. The world sorely needs Him today, to liberate it from the service of things, from its bondage to mammon. The church needs Him to liberate it from bondage to meaningless metaphysics, effete science, useless formulas, and burdensome institutions; but especially to free human nature from the service of mammon. Can you not hear Him saying—Woe unto ye churchman and men of substance. For ye hold long conventions and revise prayer books and sanctify outworn institutions, defending Greek metaphysics which ye understand not. But My children are hungry in body and soul and ye bring no light of joy or freedom or beauty into their lives.

To sum the matter up. If, by faith be meant the preservation of social customs and scientific and theological formulas that have outlived their usefulness and lost their very meanings, and that now stifle

instead of nurturing the human values, then there is an irreconcilable conflict between faith and the scientific spirit. But, if by faith be meant (and this is its true meaning) loyalty to the basic human values—to the growth in freedom, integrity, love and beauty of every human soul—then there is no conflict between science and religion. For the function of science is to minister to the development of the soul of man, by giving him an intelligent mastery over the natural conditions of his soul-life. And the function of faith is to invigorate and unify the human values, individual and social, of life, by filling the soul of man with the sense that these human values have their root and ground and goal in the Whole—in the Cosmic Spirit who thus is in the eyes of faith both the author of Nature and the Father of Spirits. Since this was the pivot of all the teachings and works of our Master Jesus Christ, I can see no conflict between His work and the scientific spirit.

One thing more—We have inherited a *two-world theory*; a doctrine that the spiritual or supernatural universe is separate from this world of nature and humanity in which we live. This doctrine is attributed, mistakenly, I think, to Plato. At any rate it is deeply interwoven with our theological and religious traditions. It must be gotten rid of. It is not in harmony with the spirit of science, and is now a positive hindrance to the true end of religion—to the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is un-Jesuanic. Jesus believed and taught that the Kingdom was to be realized on earth—within the souls of living men and in actual society. Human good for Him could not be attained by an individual otherwise than in social rela-

tionships. Jesus was a non-militaristic anarchist with respect to the political and social order in which He found Himself. He let its arrangements and institutions severely alone. But there can be little doubt that He had no use either for the Judean Messianic Ideal or for Roman Imperialism. His kingdom was not of this world, in the sense that He would have no traffic that He could avoid either with Jewish or Roman statecraft. But he founded a *free society of loving human souls whose laws were written on the tablets of their spirits, since their standards, aims, and motives were drawn from within, from the fountain of human values, from the spring within the heart which is the welling up in the individual man of the reservoirs and deeps of God.* The Kingdom of God is a free society of integral and loving spirits. It is the beloved community, as Royce puts it. We are to seek to live in it and spread it here and now.

The two-world theory is something more than an intellectual obstacle that keeps modern-minded men away from Christ. *It is the excuse for the perpetuation of hoary injustices. It was made the excuse for slavery. Today it is the port of refuge for the defenders of economic oppression, of political obscurantism, and of all forms of standpattism.* The disinherited of the earth, the ignorant and the poor, the meek and the lowly, the lovers of their kind, are offered their rewards in an other world. Grant to the lords of the earth the divine right of private property as established by custom and interpreted by law which is but a generalization from custom and they are entirely willing that the meek should inherit the other world.

On the other hand, economic and political Socialism

faces the imminent danger of the same materialism that the two-world theory sanctions. There are not two worlds but there are differing dimensions in the one world. There are differing orders or planes of human values. In the order of values comes first the spiritual (the whole realm of personal values, beauty, truth, integrity and love); afterwards come the economic and political. That the spiritual values shall interpenetrate and dominate all the institutions and activities of human society, since they are the essence of Divinity and do interpenetrate and dominate the Cosmos—such I understand to be the heart of Christian or Jesu-centric faith. It is in this same faith, that the devotee of true science, but not always its economic exploiter, works. When faith is freed from its entangling alliance with effete metaphysics and exploded superstitions, it is seen that the main-spring of science is but one phase of the orbbed whole of faith in the Cosmic Father of Spirits, which is the essence of religion.



## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD

IRVING MAURER

AN INEVITABLE process is constantly at work in our thinking about God. We cannot help looking at God through the lens of our particular generation. Hence we find it necessary to cast aside many of the terms with which a preceding age interpreted God. We must also expect that a succeeding generation will possibly reject much of what we ourselves have thought about God. And yet we cannot evade trying to put our thought of God into such words that our religion will appear a vital thing, living in the air which we, the living generation, breathe.

What is the distinctive aspect of modern life? I may say, briefly, that it is the thought of existence as no predetermined thing. We have great confidence in the power of the human mind to discover more and more about this world and about ourselves. As this process continues the reality of a moral life increases. What many preceding generations with genuine insight described as mechanically doing the will of God, we regard as a much more dramatic affair. The issue really depends upon us more than it ever did. We are not impressed by the transcendence nor by the abstractness of God. We believe that we are ourselves sharing in the creation of a universe. And the universe is no longer thought to be a self-realized thing—it is a self-realizable thing. It is not perfect—it is making toward perfection.

I am not expert in judging either the value or the falsity of any particular doctrine of evolution. So

long as the scientists do not themselves, in detail, agree, one can well be content simply to take their conclusions as a whole. The thought, that the universe is still being made, is the characteristic of a modern age.

The idea of a creative evolution centers our thoughts about God in that element in the Christian idea which is distinctively Christian. The thought of a personal God, says Professor Williams Adams Brown, comes into Christianity from Judaism. The idea of an absolute God comes into Christianity from the Greeks.\* The distinctive idea of the Christian theology is the thought of God as Christlike. Not in a philosophy, but in a life, in a living personality, does Christianity find God.

This idea, that Jesus is our revelation of God, was subjected to many strains during the intervening years, largely because it was thought by believers who looked upon the world as static. The thought of a Christlike God clashes with the idea of an infinite ruler; hence appeared the bizarre contortions of Jesus' death on the cross into pictures of a hideous God. But today, with our thought of a world in the making, with our discovery of a process still continuing by which life is shaping new forms and new situations, this idea of God as revealed in Jesus Christ becomes a more natural thing.

Modern psychology has greatly increased for us the importance of conduct as a factor in the creation of a universe. This makes easy the thought of God in the world, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Ethical forces then become one with the creative life

---

\*Outline of Christianity, pp. 83, 85.

of God. There never was a time more hospitable than is ours to the ethical importance of God.

When we say that Christianity teaches the Christlikeness of God, we imply two things. There are thoughts about God which Jesus gave us. And there are revelations of God in the character of Jesus. A modern world finds its surest ground in the latter—God as suggested by the character of Jesus.

In the teachings of Jesus two great thoughts stand today as the kernel, the heart of his message. First is the thought that God is Father. The other is the thought of the Kingdom of God. I love the Lord's Prayer as it is given in the gospel according to Luke. "Father, . . . thy Kingdom come." Here is stated in one phrase the entire Christian doctrine of God as thought out by Jesus. The idea of God as Father is an idea of Old Testament days. The prophets called God Father of Israel. But it was an idea of a tribal God. Jesus made this idea more intimate. He interpreted it in terms of a providential universe in which men enjoy the blessings of existence, in such a way that the personal, the individual life is not overlooked. No careful student of Jesus' teachings can escape the conclusion that a direct result of his work was greatly to magnify the importance of the individual, by suggesting God as a personal friend of the individual lives of men.

But the thought of God's fatherliness was presented side by side with the idea of the Kingdom. This was an attempt on the part of Jesus to transform a semi-political nationalistic eschatology into a universal ideal. With Jesus' interpretation of the Kingdom went the implication of a universal sonship with

God, and the identification of spiritual with moral endeavor. In the Kingdom of God, Jesus views humanity as one with himself in sonship with a God who is spirit, who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

These ideas of the fatherliness of God and of human life as a striving for a Kingdom of God became vitalized by the spirit with which the character of Jesus has impressed the world. The prevailing fact in the life of Jesus was his life of love. He did not say so much about the love of God as he said about our love for God, which he identified with love for all men. The early Christian church recorded an accurate valuation of Jesus in words like these: I am the way, the truth and the life—no man cometh unto the Father but by me. God is love. He that loveth not knoweth not God. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.

To summarize—in Jesus we have two great thoughts, the fatherliness of God and his Kingdom of love, conceived of as a universal relation, the aim and goal of all human hopes. These two great ideas live because of the moral grandeur and beauty of the life which taught them, which life, says the Christian, gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

If there is any difficulty for a modern man with this thought of God, such difficulty is apt to arise because the world has viewed this conception through the colored glass of an animistic world. We have been

held by the spell of the Greek interest in the essential qualities of our world. The idea of the soul and of God has usually been connected with the thought of ghosts or shades flitting about in other realms. There is no doubt that the early church was living in a world filled with evil and good spirits in this ghostly sense. The modern world sees little in this idea. The difference might be stated thus: the old world would have said, God is a loving spirit. The modern world says, God is the spirit of love. The old world said, God is the Holy Spirit. The modern world says, God is the spirit of holiness. The term *spiritual* means for us today moral and ethical qualities. Immediately one sees how modern Jesus was. Jesus did little abstract reasoning. Jesus pictured God as a father forgiving a prodigal son. He gave us our idea of goodness by words like these: love your enemies, judge not, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Jesus' great concern was the spirit which was in men. By sonship with God, Jesus meant a moral affinity with a heavenly Father.

For the Christian this is the important fact for us to consider—the life of moral goodness as the way to the Father. A modern scientific account of existence does not penetrate this principle either to prove or disprove, for the last step is always a leap of faith. But the modern thought-world, with its idea of an unfolding and continuous process in the universe, is exceedingly hospitable to the Christian idea of an ethical God, whose character consists of moral qualities which are akin to the ethical forces of human life. It is the Christian belief that God is in the moral situations of life, that existence is a drama, in

which men are actually helping to make the world, and that the spiritual conflicts and achievements are life at its highest point and most expressive of the forces which made the world.

The modern trend of thought about God may be illustrated by saying that today we are making more of the ethical than of the mystical approach to God. Our interest is less in finding God first and doing his will as a result. We are more sure of the purpose and will of human life than we are sure of God as a creative factor. We realize that the failure of mysticism has always been the failure to moralize itself. Becoming, in its dependence upon God, independent of the world, it fades off into sentimental moods without accomplishing a real success for a heavenly Kingdom. And, disillusioned by the sorrows and tragedies of the war, a modern world is seeking for a way to live. It finds in Jesus a way. The important thing for a modern world is to be traveling, testing, adventuring. For many who start upon the way it is as yet a way in the darkness. When you start up Mount Rainier you start before sunrise, and then, when long upon the way, you see the great light in the skies.

Hence the social approach to God is the modern note. "Religion," says Professor Ames, "is a consciousness of the highest social values."\* Professor Patten says, "the Holy Spirit is the social spirit."† This is a modern restatement of the definition of religion as the life of God in the soul of man. "Whosoever," said Jesus, "doeth the will shall know of the doctrine."

---

\*Journal of Religion, May, 1921, p. 264.

†Social Basis of Religion, p. 204.

Christianity says to a modern world, "We believe that God is love, that the love of God in the world is the love of man for man, that this energy of the inner life reveals the world and the universe more than any other, that the energies and forces of our universe are not free from this bond of love, that God is a rewarder to all those who diligently seek after him." The noblest incentive for unselfishness is still the thought of the Kingdom, or the democracy, of love, the thought that, in denying self for the good of all, we are feeling in our hearts the life which was in Jesus, and in all good, unselfish men who ever lived.

The Christianity of a scientific, modern world finds in the universe a moral purpose. It interprets the life force, the source of all things, the creative energy, in terms of love. "The universe which produced us is not alien to the moral values which are to our souls the bread of life. There is still no better word for God than Father, and, if life is to be more than a distracting jangle of physical forces, there is still no more helpful suggestion of what God is than is given by the life which Jesus lived, and which, through Christian discipleship, is made possible for us all.

Christianity accepts all truth and insists that the true spirit of religion cultivates the love of truth. But Christianity, as it thinks of God, is not delivered over to a total or complete adjustment to this world as it exists. Its Kingdom is, in a true sense, not of this world. The forces which are in our world are also forces which are perpetually changing the world into a newer and a better world. In the new volume by Mr. C. E. Montague, "Disenchantment," the writer, for many years a contributor to the *Manchester*

*Guardian*, has this to say about war chaplains. After describing some of the best and bravest of them he intimates that the common men at arms were a bit disappointed in them. This type of chaplain tried too much to have men think of him as a man among them, with "no clerical nonsense." "The vigor with which he threw off the parson and put on the man and the brother did not always strike the original men and brothers as it was intended. Your virilist chaplain was apt to overdo, to their mind, his jolly implied disclaimance of any compromising connection with Kingdoms not of this world."

This thought of a heavenly Kingdom is today the great saving aspect of God, as a force in existence supplying at once the energy and the goal of life. Without that goal of moral purpose the scientific description of existence would be of little meaning. As we think of life we see that God has moral qualities which lift us out of a temporary life and make us citizens of an eternal order. This is the value of the Christian idea of God for a modern world.

Some may say that what I have put forth is a man-made God. It is not that. It is a man-discovered God. A God of love is still a God who is above all and through all and in all. We need him much more than he needs us. But he needs us. And we are more interested in his character than in his nature, and, knowing what love is, even though knowing darkly, we can lean on God, pray to him, as one friend to another, or as a child to a father, and can go ahead with minds unfettered, and spirits free, to the adventure of life.



## MODERN SCHOLARSHIP AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

E. F. CHAUNCEY

THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY of the New Testament has as its aim a two-fold purpose: The attempt, by comparison of manuscripts, to free the text from accretions and additions, and to restore it to its original form; and, secondly, to gain a new conception of the contents and the character of the revelations contained in that book. In both these realms of effort, great discoveries have been made and science has bequeathed to human kind, through its patient and painstaking devotion to truth, a rich legacy.

The scientific study is not an event but a movement. It is still pursuing its quest for truth, but it has already produced profound results. It has revised the gospel texts, it has given us a new vision of revelation and inspiration, and it has placed a new valuation upon the contents and the character of the New Testament. The old idea of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, of their verbal inspiration, has been disproved, and a new idea of their human, and yet of their divine origin has developed. So that, today, we are drawn to the conclusion that the New Testament "is not the words of God, but the Word of God." The evidence upon which this confession of faith is built is varied, cumulative and profound. The process by which this faith is justified can be easily summarized.

At the outset, when the scientific investigators began to study systematically the four gospels, they still held to the theory of verbal inspiration. But very speedily

they bumped against certain clearly defined facts which tended to disprove it. The first major problem to come to the surface was what is known as the problem of the Fourth Gospel. When a comparison of the gospels was made, when the contents of each were placed in parallel columns, and carefully scrutinized, it was discovered that, while the first three gospels were pervaded by a common likeness, the fourth gospel was a thing apart—totally unlike in its structure, its fundamental ideas and its language. Here was a profound problem. If all the gospels were written by God, how could God contradict himself so flagrantly? If the three gospels were correct in every detail, how could the fourth be equally correct when it constantly and characteristically faulted the others?

The major facts which brought this problem into view were these: In the first three gospels, there was revealed a well-defined outline of Jesus' public ministry divided into three epochs. He began His ministry in *Galilee*, then, very abruptly, after the feeding of the multitudes, He went into retirement with His disciples *on foreign soil*, where He remained until His final journey to *Jerusalem*. In the fourth gospel this general outline disappears and we meet with three scenes in Jerusalem during three Passover periods. Again, in the first three gospels, Jesus is invariably portrayed as being very reserved in His self-manifestation. At the beginning of His ministry, He proclaims the speedy coming of His Kingdom, and it is the Kingdom that is declared and defined through His parables and His life. It is not until the period of His retirement that He makes Himself known in His capacity as the Son of Man, and then, only to His disciples. The

general public remains in ignorance of the fact always. But in the fourth gospel, from the very outset, He is portrayed as the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and is known to be the long expected One who is to be the originator of the new era. What was a secret revealed with hesitancy to a few men, is in this gospel declared openly to all men and understood by many men other than His disciples. But the most striking illustration of the contrasts and contradictions is revealed in the different portrayals of the Master Himself. In the three gospels He is the human Jesus. He is tempted, He has human feelings, He lives in close human touch with all people. He manifests a just indignation toward the pettiness and unsocialness of the Scribes and Pharisees. He castigates them in severe terms for their formal standard of morality. He is at all times a man, albeit without the consciousness of sin. Set apart from men only by the mightiness of His works and the conspicuous purity of His motives. But in the other gospel He is a Divine being who is gifted with omniscience; who lives His life apart from and above all men, who never experiences temptation, and who only once manifests the human touch of sorrow.

Besides these major differences, there are minor ones which can be briefly stated: In the last gospel, the story of the washing of the feet of the disciples is substituted for the institution of the Lord's Supper. There are no records of such turning points in Jesus' life as His baptism, His temptation, and His transfiguration. There is an entirely different account of the calling of disciples; the scene is different, the circumstances are different, and the character of the call differs.

Now these differences are so apparent, so substantial, that they force the conclusion that we have here not only two conflicting records, but behind the records, two opposing states of mind which could not by any stretch of imagination be attributed to the direct authorship of God. A God of two minds would have to be conceived of to account, on such a basis, for the gospels. And, of course, such a supposition was impossible.

When the investigators came into the presence of this dilemma; they, first, developed the hypothesis that the fourth gospel was written as a supplement to the other three. But, later, when they began to realize the full force of the fundamental distinction it contained, they concluded it could never be a supplement, but was an interpretation of the personality of Jesus, rather than an historical portrayal of the life of Jesus. That it represented a later development, was written under the later influence of Greek thought, and for the purpose of combatting certain practical and ecclesiastical problems which confronted the primitive Christian Church at the end of the first century.

While the problem of the fourth gospel was beginning to declare itself, another problem came speedily into view, which also ran counter to the old theory of verbal inspiration. When the harmony of the gospels was finally achieved, it was discovered that while there were fundamental agreements between the first three, a line of cleavage running through them; there were, also, certain fundamental as well as practical disagreements which challenged investigation and interpretation. All this constituted what is known as the second major problem of the gospels—the Synoptic Problem.

The problem which the scientists had to solve was to account for the differences and the agreements within these gospels.

The differences are so manifold and varied that it is impossible within the space of this paper to do more than enumerate the more conspicuous and glaring ones.

*Each gospel has a different dominant idea.* Mark seeks to prove that we should believe that Jesus is the Son of Man,—the supernatural ambassador of God, because He performed miracles. Matthew develops the theory that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah because He fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. While Luke promulgates the theory that Jesus is the Savior of the World.

Again, *each gospel has a different outline of events.* The foundation is the same but the superstructure is different. So different, often, that the same episode is placed at different periods of the Master's activity. Thus, for instance, the rejection at Nazareth is placed by one evangelist at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and by another towards the end. So, too, with Jesus' castigation of the money lenders in the temple. Did it take place at the beginning or the ending of his public life? Or were there two such scenes in Jerusalem at different times?

Still further, *the gospels often differ widely in their descriptions of the same scenes.* The resurrection episodes are familiar and forcible illustrations of this tendency. There are in reality two different traditions manifested. Matthew records certain resurrection appearances which took place in Galilee; while Luke

makes Jerusalem the place of revelation. And at no time do any of the statements coalesce or coincide. Mark is silent because the conclusion of that gospel has been lost.

*Beside these differences there are others which add to the cumulative force of this problem.* The language of the three gospels is conspicuously different. The personal peculiarities reveal themselves on every page. Not all the episodes are recorded by each of the evangelists. Mark knows no Sermon on the Mount. Luke, on the other hand, has portions of that teaching spread throughout his gospel, but with characteristic modifications, as in the Beatitudes. Mark has no birth story, while Matthew and Luke have two differing accounts which trace Jesus' descent from different ancestry. In general, it may be said, that two-thirds of Mark is found in Matthew and Luke, that often two accounts are at variance with a third, that much of Matthew is found in Luke, and that some great parables which are found in Luke are not recorded in either Mark or Matthew.

Now these differentia strike deep at the roots of the mechanical theory of inspiration. They compel the conclusion that God uses *man* as an instrument of revelation, that His inspiration of Him is never artificial, never destroys the personal equation; is indeed made through human instrumentation in spite of human imperfections. Only on such a basis can we account for the differentiation within the field of the three gospels.

But, if this is true, and if there is a substantial agreement in general outline of the life, and also a detail agreement in phrases and peculiar words running

through the records, we are brought face to face with another major, outstanding problem. Stated in a few words, that problem is this: If the theory of human inspiration will account for the differences, will it not be necessary to maintain the theory of mechanical inspiration to account for the fundamental and practical agreements in these gospels? This is certainly another problem compelling careful analysis and study. It is evident that it is impossible to hold at one and the same moment two conflicting theories of Divine authorship. If the human conception of revelation is to supersede the old theory, it must prove itself here as well as elsewhere. It must account for the agreements also.

Before we fashion an answer, let us understand the size and scope of the problem. It can be stated concisely and in part certain facts have been suggested already. We are familiar with the general outline of the life,—the movement from Galilee to foreign soil, to Jerusalem. In this portrayal of the progress of events there are portions in the three gospels where certain episodes are told at about the same length and with a marvelous similarity of language which expresses itself, even in sentences, or phrases, or words, which are exactly alike. This notable feature is repeated time again throughout the gospels, and those passages which are in conspicuous agreement are many in number, as, for instance, the account of John the Baptist's ministry, or the calling of disciples, or the healing of the paralytic, and pre-eminently the stories of the last days,—of the entry into Jerusalem, of the trial and the condemnation and of the crucifixion.

Here, then, we have a general and a particular agreement among the accounts which call for an explanation.

In answer to this main problem, the scientists have discovered a rational and reasonable solution. They have agreed that while each gospel has an individuality of its own, reveals the markings of its human authorship, yet, also each is linked to the other by a common dependence on some earlier sources, and by an interdependence with one another. They are not separate gospels produced without reference to each other, but rather they draw from common sources and are closely related.

This theory is in line with Luke's introduction to Theophilus where he asserts that with various gospels before him, he has given himself the task of sifting the material and of presenting a thoughtful and truthful account of the history of Jesus life. Indeed, this theory is backed by other reasonable deductions. It is certain that at an early date the apostles must have treasured orally the sayings of Jesus, and also to have preserved an outline of His life. While they were the leaders in the apostolic church, there was no need for any formal or written word to supersede their statements; but when they began to be gathered to their fathers, the church set its hand to the task of writing out what the apostles had handed down by word of mouth.

It is difficult to portray convincingly and minutely the process by means of which the present gospels came into being. But their origin and development has been determined beyond question. First, in course of time, a selection of the "Sayings of Jesus" was compiled.



This compilation contained some historical matter ; but in the main it coincided in its contents with the so-called Sermon on the Mount, which is not strictly a sermon, but a collection of the most striking teachings of Jesus. This compilation was embodied corporately into the book of Matthew. In Luke, however, the same sayings, modified and translated into more classical Greek, are brought into connection with the special circumstances which drew them forth from the mind and heart of the Master.

A second early source was an historic sketch of the life of Jesus, which perhaps had its source in the experiences of Peter, which Mark amplified, extended and explained, and which later became the gospel of Mark. This gospel, probably, is not our present Mark, but certainly approximated it very closely. This gospel was used by both Matthew and Luke. This conclusion explains why so much of Mark is found in both those gospels, and why there is such a general agreement in outline and such a specific agreement in detail. They are alike in character and content; not because they were mechanically inspired, but because they rest upon the same source, and because Matthew and Luke used it as the ground work of their gospels.

It has already been noted that there are certain parables in Luke which are peculiar to him alone. The critics have attributed this to the existence of certain fragments which were available to Luke,—who wrote later than either Mark or Matthew, and which he incorporated into his gospel. Thus we have as the earliest sources of these gospels a collection of the sayings

of Jesus, an historical outline of His life, and certain fragments.

This short sketch of the origin and development of the gospels explains the Synoptic Problem. It shows that the agreements within the gospels are due to their interdependence, and that the disagreements within these gospels are due to the individual peculiarities of the minds of their authors. It also disproves the old theory of verbal inspiration and proves the modern and scientific theory of human inspiration.

It might be asked, what is the value of all this research, this analysis and criticism? What contribution does it make to modern life? How does it add to and vitalize the gospels? Does it not destroy their abiding and divine character? What is the sum total of new values which this scientific study has bequeathed to mankind?

In answer, it may be said, first, that the old idea of verbal inspiration which was untenable and also unethical, has once and for all been destroyed; and a more reasonable, more ethical conception of inspiration, which asserts that God inspires men, works through men, using them as instruments of revelation, in spite of their imperfections, has been established. All this adds to the dignity and the glory of man. All this declares the ethical nature of God. And all this brings the gospels into harmony with the facts of life.

Secondly, as each of these gospels views the life of the Master from a different angle, point of vision, we are given a total view of His life which is greater than any one of the descriptions. Indeed, this total view corrects the partial and fractional aspects of

each gospel; but also presents the character and the conduct of the Supreme Person in its fundamental aspect.

And finally, the scientific study of the gospels has bequeathed to us a mine of riches. It has given us an approximately correct text of all the gospels. It has given us an insight into the times and the thoughts of the men of that day, which has made the life and teaching of the Master more real. It has put His life into touch with the world-life of which He was a part. Above all, it has made His life more real, more profoundly ethical and more supremely religious.

## MODERN CRITICISM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

CHARLES BURGESS KETCHAM

MODERN criticism, especially as applied to the Old Testament, has presented us with a serious problem, for it has shaken the very foundations upon which belief in the Bible has rested for centuries. To our fathers the Old Testament was the inspired word of God, "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness," and that was the end of the matter. There could be no mistakes for the Old Testament was the product of revelation. It was the word of God and, therefore, was true every whit. To all doubts and questionings their one reply was that, if mistake or inaccuracy could be proved, in the Old Testament, that of itself would prove that the Old Testament was not God's word; and that, if the Old Testament was not in very fact God's word, as it claimed to be, it must be false throughout and therefore no credence could be placed in it.

But the scholar, approaching the Bible in a scientific attitude, cannot accept such a naive conception. He does not begin with certain a-priori or fixed notions of God and revelation and inspiration and then reason deductively from them what the Bible is or ought to be, but he begins with the material of the Bible itself

and then reasons in the other direction. He applies to the Bible the same tests he applies to all ancient literatures and brings to bear on the study of it all the wealth of our modern knowledge in the fields of history and religion and anthropology. Then after a thorough investigation and a careful weighing of the evidence, he comes to his conclusions. Let us see what some of these conclusions are and how they correspond with the views our fathers held on the same matters.

In the first place, he finds that the old Testament is not a unit, but that it is the product of many minds and many centuries. Some of it was very evidently written before the Exile, while the Jewish Kingdom was still in existence; other parts were confessedly written long after that period. This fact helps us to understand some of the wide theological differences which we discover in the Old Testament, for it is a far cry from the flood story, with its picture of Jehovah relenting in His heart because He smells the sweet odor of the burning beasts (Gen. 8.21), to the profound religious conceptions of Isaiah 53; and from the statement in 2 Sam. 24.1 that it was the "anger of Jehovah" which moved David to number the people to the opposite statement of the author of 1 Chronicles 21.1 concerning the same event—that it was Satan, and not Jehovah, who "stood up against Israel" and moved David to number the people. In the marked contrast which exists between the latter part of the 137 Psalm and the message of the prophet Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylonia we have another example of the lack of unity which can be found in the Old Testament, only in this case there is no long period

of time intervening, for the utterances are contemporaneous:

“O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed,  
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee  
As thou hast served us.  
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy  
little ones  
Against the rock.” (Psa. 137.8, 9).

And now the Christ-like words of the prophet Jeremiah under the same circumstances:

“Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all the captivity, whom I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters: and multiply ye there and be not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, *and pray unto Jehovah for it*; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” (Jer. 29. 4-7).

Rather more than half the Old Testament is history and, roughly, we can divide this historical material into three sections. The first section includes the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, and covers the history of the patriarchs and of the Jewish people from the creation to a point some twenty or thirty years after the Exile, which occurred in 586 B. C. The second section, although smaller in bulk, covers even more ground, beginning with Adam, the father of the race and extending down as far as 432 B. C. It includes 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehe-

miah. The third section consists of two isolated books which do not fit into either of the series just mentioned, namely, Ruth and Esther. It is around the first of these divisions of historical material that most of the controversy in the Old Testament field has centered. On the surface it appears to be a group of five books by Moses, recording the history prior to the entry into the Promised Land, and then six other books, covering the remaining six hundred and fifty years to the release of Jehoiachin, not all written at the same time, but all connected into one comprehensive historical sequence. But a close examination of the books brings many doubts as to the accuracy of the traditional view. A number of historical references to events and conditions as late as the time of Saul demonstrate that some parts, at least, of the five books of Moses were written long after Moses' death. And it is plain, too, that the material in the Pentateuch is not a unit. To illustrate: there are two stories of the creation, varying widely in order of events and in the nature of the process (Gen. 1:1-2, 3; 2:4-25); two stories of the way in which Abraham passed off his wife as his sister (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18); two stories of the changing of Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:22-32; 35:9-15); two accounts of the death of Aaron (Num. 33:38-39; Deut. 10:6), the one placing it at Mt. Hor and the other at Moserah; two stories of how the tribe of Levi was set apart for religious service (Num. 3:5-10; Deut. 10:8-9); two accounts of the expulsion of Hagar from Abraham's tent (Gen. 16:4-14; 21:9-21); and two accounts of the revelation of the name, "Jehovah," to Moses (Ex. 3:13-15; 6:2-4), as well as many others which we have not time to mention here. In some cases,

instead of two separate narratives, we find a composite account with irreconcilable elements standing side by side, as in the story of the flood, where we read in one verse, "And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." (Gen. 7:12), and in another farther on, "And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days." (Gen. 7:24); and where there is also a conflict as to the number of animals of each species that were taken into the ark. In the story of the exploration and report of the spies sent ahead into the Land of Canaan we have another such composite narrative. But probably the most striking example of the lack of unity in the Pentateuch is that we find in the differences between sections of the law contained in it. At least three separate strata of law have been found, belonging to three widely separated periods of Hebrew history. This can be verified by examining the three different and conflicting laws of slavery, the three laws on homicide, the three laws concerning the tithe and the three stages in Hebrew practice relative to the Priests and the Levites.

Such evidence of stratification and lack of unity in the material of the Pentateuch can lead but to one conclusion, when considered independently and frankly, and that is that the material which is used in the Pentateuch has been drawn from more than one source and has been brought together and put in its present form by an editor. Such a conclusion immediately raises the question as to whether we can distinguish in any way between the sources and follow the editor in his task of arranging and combining. A study of the Pentateuch, with this purpose in mind, will not long remain unrewarded. Wide differences in style and material can



very easily be discerned and these will give us our clew to the solution of the problem. In the main, we find three large bodies of material in the Pentateuch. The first is the book of Deuteronomy, which is very different, both in form and content, from all of the other parts of the Pentateuch. It has an atmosphere, a style and a message all its own. For convenience we call this source "D." After "D" is taken out, we find that the remainder of the Pentateuch falls very naturally into two parts,—the first a body of simple narratives, characterized by primitive religious customs and beliefs, which we know as "JE," and the other a group of narratives, characterized by very different religious customs and beliefs, used to introduce and give authority to an elaborate code of laws, which presupposes a highly-developed ecclesiastical system. This last we know as "P." The material from these three sources was brought together by an editor, or by a group of editors, who sorted and arranged it, and who modified it here and there as suited the general purpose. To western minds such an hypothesis is, at first glance, absurd, but it is not difficult to show that such a mode of procedure was often used by authors of sacred books in the East, not only at this time, but also at much later dates. There are two very clear and interesting illustrations of this sort of thing connected with our Bible, where we can actually follow the editor at his work. The first is in the Book of Chronicles and of it G. B. Gray says, in his "Critical Instruction to the Old Testament,"

"There is no better or surer way to an understanding of the methods of a Hebrew historian than by a comparison of corresponding parts of Chronicles and of Samuel or

Kings. The later writer, with an earlier work before him, was content to copy out word for word passages of the earlier work without any particular acknowledgment that he was so doing; at times also he abbreviated, at times he expanded; at times he introduced purely verbal modifications; at times he introduced modifications that greatly affected the sense of the original." (Page 8.)

A careful comparison of the following passages will show how this was done: 2 Samuel 10:1-5 with 1 Chronicle 19:1-5; 2 Samuel 24:1-10 with 1 Chronicles 21:1-8. The second illustration is found in the Diatesaron of Tatian, which is a story of the life of Jesus made up solely of passages from the four gospels, arranged and pieced together by the editor.

The question now arises, can we date these sources, even approximately, so as to form some idea of the growth of the canon and the date at which the Pentateuch was given to the Hebrew people as a finished work? The best we can do in some cases is to give an approximate date which will satisfy the conditions reflected in the book, but for the source "D" it is possible to arrive at a definite date. It was the Book of the Law which was found in the Temple in 621 B. C. and which brought about the reforms of King Josiah immediately thereafter. The reasons for identifying "D" as this "Book of the Law" are as follows: (1) When this book was read before the King, it filled his heart with fear and caused him to tear his garment. In "D" alone can there be found warnings in number of the nature to cause such fear and such demonstration. (2) The material in "D" is the only body of source material in the Pentateuch short enough to be read through at a

single Temple service before the King and the people, as is described in 2 Kings. (3) The reforms which Josiah instituted, as a result of the finding of the "Book of the Law," were exactly the reforms advocated by "D" (see 2 Kings 23), while the other parts of the Pentateuch contain laws and methods of practice which are in direct contradiction, in many cases, to the new methods of procedure set up by Josiah. (4) The great prophetic personalities before 621 B. C.—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah—show no trace of Deuteronomic influence and make no reference to the distinctive laws and religious conceptions of "D," while those who came later—Jeremiah, Ezekial, Deutero-Isaiah (ch. 40-66), and the author of the Book of Kings—show very plain evidence of Deuteronomic influence.

With this date established, it is not so difficult to figure forward and backward to approximate dates for the other bodies of source material in the Pentateuch. It is very plain that the "*JE*" narrative are much the older than "D," for in them we find laws and customs which correspond to a state of civilization much more primitive and pastoral than that reflected in "D." There is a difference in religious conceptions also; for instance, where we find "D" classifying as idolatrous all sacrifice and all worship to Jehovah, save that performed at the central altar at Jerusalem, we find in the "*JE*" narratives many instances in which the patriarchs built altars and sacrificed and annointed stones and regarded the same as a sacred duty. Just how much older these narratives are than "D" we cannot say exactly, but phrases such as, "Before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." (Gen. 36:31) and "The Canaanite was then in the land. (Gen. 12:6;

13:7), show that they could not have been written before the day of Saul and probably not before the reign of David. So we give them the approximate date of 900 or 1000 B. C.

The source material called "P," which is a symbol standing for "Priestly Code," is much later in time than "D" and must have been written in Babylonia some time between 500 and 450 B. C. Throughout its narratives the laws of "D" concerning altars is presupposed and the patriarchs are never pictured as building altars or establishing high places for the worship of Jehovah outside of Jerusalem. In the laws relating to the Priests and the Levites, however, "P" makes a great advance over the legislation in "D." In the book of Ezekiel we find the laws just mentioned in the transition stage, midway between "D" and "P," and we know that Ezekiel wrote his book very close to 570 B. C. In the year 444 B. C. Ezra brought about a new series of reforms in Jerusalem and, in accordance with one of them, the Feast of Booths was celebrated for eight days (Neh. 8:18), as commanded in "P" (Leviticus 23:36), instead of seven days, as had been commanded in "D" (Deut. 16:13). Hence "P" must have been written sometime between the date of Ezekiel's book and the year of Ezra's reforms in Jerusalem and the other evidence at hand favors the latter part of that period.

With this hasty, and by no means exhaustive, review of the source material lying behind our present Pentateuch, let us turn now to see the process by which that source material was brought together and note how that process takes its place in the general development of a recognized body of religious literature for

the Hebrew people. We must begin, of course, where all literature begins, with oral tradition and remember that before there was ever a book or a story in writing there existed an extensive literature, which was told by story-tellers and treasured in the memory by generation after generation. Then, according to the natural history of literature everywhere, arose epic poetry and great occasions and memorable events were celebrated in heroic verse. Many examples of this early type of literature are to be found cropping out as quotations in the Old Testament, such as—the curse of Noah (Gen. 9:25f), the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:2-17), the fragment from the “Book of the Wars of Jehovah” (Num. 21:14f), and the songs of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18; Deut. 32:1-43). Then, after a time, prose forms were developed and narratives, wherein the origins of the race and the deeds of ancient heroes were treasured, were written down. Two of these, which were written about the time of David, were later used as source material by the editor who gave the Pentateuch its form, the one which we call “J” apparently written by a man who lived in south Palestine and who was interested chiefly in the heroes and the history of the Tribe of Judah, and the other, which we call “E,” probably written by one who lived among the northern tribes and who was interested in the historical events and the great men in his part of the country. To these narratives of ancient times there were soon added other books and records which were destined to become source material for the canonical books of the Old Testament. As examples of such we might mention the Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29), the Books of the Chronicles of the

Kings of Israel (1 Kings 14:19), the Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41), the Temple records and certain independent prophetic narratives, emanating from the Northern Kingdom, concerning the exploits of Elijah, Elisha and other religious figures of their age.

Late in the history of the Kingdom of Israel we come to the first book of our Old Testament canon—the book of the Prophet Amos, which can with confidence be dated close to 760 B. C., during the reign of Jereboam II. The second book to be written came soon after, about 740 B. C., the book of the prophet Hosea, who also spoke the “word of Jehovah” in the Kingdom of Israel. In the space of the next forty years two more prophetic books were added—Micah and Isaiah, chapters 1 to 39, thus bringing the total to four books at approximately 700 B. C. The next book to appear was the “Book of the Law” which was found in the Temple in 621 B. C. and which we know as Deuteronomy. Following these came two more great prophetic works, written at the beginning of the Exile,—the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Deuteronomy had brought into the religious thinking of the people certain new and very definite conceptions which in some cases very materially changed the estimate which the people put upon the general current of Jewish history and so, during the Exile, not far from 550 B. C., the history of the Jewish people was rewritten from the standpoint of Deuteronomic ideas, chief among which were these two: (1) that true sacrifice could only be offered to Jehovah at Jerusalem; and (2) that Jehovah always rewarded righteousness with prosperity and happiness and sin with defeat and shame. Thus Samuel and Kings came

to be written, the authors reworking the source material in their hands—Temple records, prophetic narratives, and royal Chronicles—according to Deuteronomic ideas and forms. It is probable too that at this same time the ancient history was reworked also and a basis for our present Pentateuch laid in a combination of “J” and “E” with “D.” One of the most notable of all the contributions which were made to the religious literature of the Jews was written somewhat later in the Exile and is now to be found in Chapters 40 to 66 of the Book of Isaiah. It too was prophetic in character.

About 500 B. C. a new direction was given to Hebrew religion by the promulgation of the Priestly Code. Its code of law was very elaborate and it was as distinctly an advance over “D” as “D” was an advance over the primitive system which had existed before 621 B. C. In part it was due to the remarkable influence of the prophet Ezekiel. Sometime in the course of the next hundred years, under the skillful hands of some enterprising editor, our present Pentateuch took shape, bringing into one compact work the narratives of “J” and “E,” the laws and exhortations of “D” and the laws and narratives of “P.” Later still, probably in the neighborhood of the year 300 B. C., the history contained in the book of Samuel and Kings was re-written from this new theological standpoint and many events added which had transpired after the writing of the books of Kings, giving us the new historical series—Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah.

The development here outlined does not comprehend the whole of the process by which the religious literature of the Jews grew from primitive beginnings

to the fullness of our Old Testament canon, but only the main outlines of that process. For even a passing mention of the remaining books important as they are, we have not the time today.

And now, what kind of an Old Testament do we have left, when we have made this analysis and satisfied ourselves as to the main features of the process by which our sacred books came into being? Is it a wreck, as the literalists would claim? And has its spiritual value for us been ruthlessly torn from it? It would be false to say it, for there has been nothing about the historical survey which has served to dim one word of promise or to obscure one word of truth. The Psalms have not lost one heart-throb in our study nor the words of the Prophet Amos aught of their power and passion. It is rather that some timid folk have rushed unthinkingly to the conclusion that when their preconceived notions about the Bible have been shown to be groundless the Bible itself has been destroyed. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because we know better, we can use it more intelligently; and, certainly, we love it no less. Its words of truth are still a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway. We must cast away our fears for that which is true is necessarily from God. Jesus said that the truth could do only one thing for us—make us free. And that is just what this method of historical study does do for us; it sets us free from a whole host of problems and makes it possible for us to live in the Twentieth Century intellectually and still believe in our Bible. By this method of study we come to see that the Old Testament is the sum of the religious thinking of a godly people for seven centuries and a record of the spiritual pilgrim-



age by which they advanced a step at a time from their first crude notions of God to the moral grandeur of Jeremiah's "New Covenant" and the matchless vision of the "Suffering Servant" in Isaiah 53. It is the record of the Father's progressive and creative revelation of Himself in the life of the Jewish nation and in the personalities of her prophets. In it we can see Him at work, not in a unique fashion peculiar to that age alone, but in the same tender, patient, and persuasive fashion that He still uses among us.

Our individual lives are so short that it is not always easy in a single generation to see the hand of God at work in His universe, shaping events to His purpose and civilization to His will; but in the Old Testament there is a Divine perspective which sets centuries in order as we set years. Seen from this angle, the unchristian elements of the story drop out of sight and the crudities of primitive belief trouble us no longer—they are but detail in the process of which the goal is the Kingdom of God. Its pathetically human qualities make it very real to us while, on the other hand, its flashes of insight and its gleams of revelation make it the very bread of life to our hungry souls. There is a halo of glory about the old book, for we see God in it and we rejoice to be sharers through it with Him in His vision of a world made perfect in righteousness:

“Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I

was an husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Driver, S. R.—"Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament."  
Gray, G. B.—"Critical Introduction to the Old Testament."  
Hastings.—"Dictionary of the Bible."  
Large use was also made of the Class Notes on Lectures by Prof. R. W. Rogers of Drew Theological Seminary.

## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF CHRIST

WALTER EVERETT BURNETT

MY THEME,—“The Christian Idea of Christ” suggests the desire and purpose to get back so far as we are able to the earliest and simplest belief concerning the personality of our Master. The first fact with which we have to reckon when we embark upon the undertaking is that there are several quite clearly marked historical strata of doctrine concerning the nature of Jesus. As in Italy churches may be found which have been built upon the foundations of older buildings which rest in turn upon still earlier bases so the doctrines concerning the person of Jesus have been built up age by age, each major epoch being marked by the effort of the living generation to deal with the problem in the light of the best light that it had and by means of the best cultural instruments at its command. Let us grant that this necessity to think the question through was a fundamental one for these earlier Christian thinkers and that it is fundamental for us. But we must clearly grasp the fact that their conclusions being conditioned by the *relative* adequacy of the knowledge and the thought forms of their time are not binding upon us who live in another world than theirs in knowledge and intellectual method, and that we must think the problem through afresh in the belief that the centuries have brought new light concerning God, man and the world that enable us to deal more adequately with it. As we deal with the great controversies of the early church we shall find ourselves handling terms that have lost their significance for the

mind of today. But as we dig persistently down to the earliest strata we find the purely theoretical and philosophical factors in Christian belief concerning Jesus becoming less while the spiritual and ethical elements are more pronounced, so that we come to a statement of the unique and divine supremacy of Jesus in terms of spiritual and moral values that lay hold upon us with commanding urgency and power. Granting this to be the primitive Christian idea of Christ we may then make the intellectual venture of relating it to our present day world of knowledge in the hope that our modern formulas being more complete than the church Father's will enable us to deal more adequately with this master problem of philosophy and religion, but knowing also that new light shall dawn after we are gone that will throw upon it a still brighter illumination.

Christendom has worshiped its Lord for more than a thousand years in an intellectual cathedral built at Chalcedon in the year 451 by a general council of the church. The issue over which the theologians wrestled then concerned the two natures of Christ, the human and divine and how they were joined in His personality. With delicately shaded phrases the thinkers elaborated their creeds the while there grew up among the people the notion that the human and divine were not only distinct from but alien to one another, and that an impossible gulf separated humanity from God. "The doctrine of the two natures became a principle of dualism which sanctioned the divorce between the human and divine, the secular and religious, the body and spirit. That dualism runs through all the institutions

of the middle ages affecting not only the religious experience but the political and social life of Christendom." Now that has become a strange language to us. We do not believe that God is separated by a great chasm from His world and from humanity. We have no interest in a discussion concerning the method of union between the human and divine as two distinct elements in the personality of Jesus. We find God in nature and its orderly process; we find God in the human mind with its instinct of rationality and the human conscience with its ethical sensitiveness; we find God within the human will and its power to give effect to the mind's higher insights. Whatever else Jesus was He was *one consciousness; within the one* must be found the wonders of the divine interpenetrating the human, nay the divine as the deepest essence of the human.

This Chalcedonian temple rests upon a Nicene foundation. The council of Nicaea was held in 325. Its main discussion centered not in the two natures of Jesus but in the relation between God and His Son in *time*. Was the Son coextensive with God the Father or was He a creature in time? The day was won by Athanasius for a Sonship coextensive with Fatherhood. The phrases seem remote to us but the issue becomes a living one when we think of the incarnation in terms of the immanent purpose that has been implicit from the beginning in the universe; in terms of that purpose Jesus was coextensive with the Father, He was the Logos, the informing Spirit of all that was.

Beneath the Nicene declaration we come upon a rugged beautiful stratum of doctrinal foundation in the Alexandrian Fathers, Clement and Origen.

These mighty thinkers lived in a world very comparable to our own, in that wide ranges of human belief demanded a comprehensive principle of interpretation and conciliation. Origen agreed with the Neo-Platonists whose object was to create an eclectic system in which all forms of philosophy and religion might be harmonized. In all his thinking, however, he rests upon the Christian revelation and brings out the truth of the incarnation as that which can alone meet the needs of speculative inquiry or the wants of the religious life. The problem of the time was no other than to bind together in organic unity the world and God,—to overcome the separation derived from oriental theosophies which was exerting its influence upon Greek philosophy as well as upon Christian thought. The dying words of Plotinus have ever been quoted as the ruling idea of his philosophy: "I am striving to bring the God which is in me into harmony with the God which is in the universe." The main difference between the Christian thinker and the pagan philosopher lay in this: that the one started with the conviction of the divine immanence in the world and in humanity, while the other could not escape from the notion of God as primarily existing at an infinite distance, in an absolute isolation from the world. One can not say that Origen was perfectly consistent in his thinking. At times heathen thought seemed to influence him strongly but he never yields his conviction of the indwelling God as revealed in Christ. His contribution toward the great question of his age was of the highest value to all who followed him. He endeavored to bind together Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a necessary organic communion and fellowship. The result of the

heathen belief invading the church was not only to separate God from man, but to separate also between the Father and the Son; to reduce Christ to the rank of creatures brought into existence by the absolute will. In the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, Origen was resisting the heathen principle which makes God the absolute incommunicable Deity.

From all eternity, so Origen reasoned, by a necessary law of His being, God communicates Himself to the Son,—the light which is the life and blessedness of the whole creation goes forth eternally from the source of light, as the rays go forth from the sun. To exist in relationship is the essential idea of God. To think otherwise would be to rob Deity of His true glory. If He existed alone in simple unity and solitary grandeur, apart from some object upon which from all eternity to expend His love, then He was not from all eternity God the Father.

This brief reference will indicate how fundamentally and yet how simply these two master minds interpret Christ to be the fulfillment of the indwelling creative life of God. There was no sundering of the human from the Divine world; no sharp cutting as by a knife of the nature of Jesus into two parts.

To bathe our minds in so rich a stream of Christian thinking prepares us to pass into the Gospels and find what we may there, before the philosophic mind had worked to any large extent upon the problem. Not that they are wholly free from the philosophic trend. It is a commonplace that the Fourth Gospel places Jesus against a philosophic background;—He is the manifestation of the Indwelling Word. The thinkers of that day would understand that. It gives the In-

comparable Figure an organic place in the world order. He is the consummation of its deep spiritual trend; He is the climax of creation.

But simpler than this is the original Christian conviction. We may take that amplified declaration which probably comes as near as anything recorded to expressing how the early Christians felt about Jesus: —“Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as you yourselves know; Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye by the hand of men without the law did crucify and slay; whom God raised up having loosed the pangs of death. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus Whom ye crucified.”

Several considerations besides these simple facts must be kept in mind. First of all we must remember the overwhelming impression of the God-like character of Jesus upon His disciples. The declaration speaks of the mighty works, but we have evidence enough to show that Jesus placed the emphasis elsewhere than in signs and wonders. If they had found a flaw in Him, if His character had been streaked with self seeking, He could never have been their Lord. He was in simple truth the incarnation of all they had been taught to think about God in His essential nature. In a living human Friend they found Holiness incarnate, Love personified, and as the revelation grew it awed them. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Another truth must be read between the lines of that early confession of faith.



God had raised up Jesus from the dead. The impression that the early Christians had of the Risen Christ can never be separated from that vivid and thrilling sense that came to them at Pentecost of the reality of the Spirit and of the Inner World in which Jesus was eternal Lord. Paul's description of the Master's resurrection appearance to Him uses these glowing terms of a spiritual apprehension.

Are we not ready to ask what Jesus said about Himself? "I and my Father are one" He said. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In the deep sanctities of an inviolable conscience, a dedicated spirit, an utterly obedient will He located the bond of intimate union with the Father and intimated its essential character. Let us be content to leave it there. Let us behold His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Freed from curious matters of theory and intricate metaphysical subtleties we may well bow before our Radiant Lord, for "God Who commanded the Light to shine out of darkness hath shone in our hearts to bring the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

I cannot treat of the Christian idea of Christ and leave out all reference to the Virgin Birth. One cannot deal intelligently with that belief without considering the fragmentary character of the New Testament references to it. And one must attach some weight to such scholars as Harnack who are convinced that it formed no part of the earliest tradition. But weightier than either of these is the consideration that a stupendous spiritual declaration such as the eternal Lordship of Jesus can scarcely hang upon any

physical fact of any nature whatsoever. The implications are too vast, the issues are too immense to hang upon a single physical incident, and that one that seems to run counter to the established order of nature. This sublime doctrine can hold its place in human thinking securely only as it is found grounded in the whole spiritual order, and to thrust its roots down to the profoundest levels of truth. It is that kind of a foundation that modern thinking lays for the central Christian doctrine. It is to be kept in mind however that one does not deny the virgin birth by insisting that it is not the rock-foundation for belief in the Eternal Lordship of the Master.

We come now to the content of that Personality which has mastered the conscience and captured the imagination of humanity. Of course we cannot separate Jesus from His race, nor can we separate Him from that royal line of spiritual seers who gave to the world the matchless prophecies of the Old Testament. He fed upon these writings. In His mind their loftiest truths burst into a finer efflorescence. They spoke of God the Father, of His holiness and love, of an order of justice and humanness, of vicarious sufferers who, blameless themselves yet bore the cruel penalties for others misdeeds. All that they taught and more, *He lived*. His Father's presence was the vital air of His daily existence; God's love was His secure shelter from life's stern buffetings, the divine tenderness glorified in His mind and heart every human being however warped or lowly, while it kindled his redemptive zeal into a quivering passion; the new order of mutual reverence and helpfulness displacing the old brutal riot of selfishness and lust as

cultivated gardens displace a howling jungle, was as real to him as the physical order in which the sun wheels its way through the heavens and the stars shed their mild radiance through the night. He was the perfect Servant of the new order in that He shrank not from men's misunderstandings of it and their hatred of it, but invested Himself to serve His living fellows and the unborn generations to the end of time by demonstrating what a redemptive and spiritually creative life should be like.

The question inevitably arises as to the validity of these ideals today. Here they are launched unto history,—as real an element in the human scene as mountains and seas. Do they meet human needs *now*, do they offer adjustments that make life saner and richer for human beings in this modern day? Surely the need is no less now than in olden days that human hope should be sustained by faith that love is behind and within the scheme of things and that it is working by intelligent methods toward a lofty goal. Men are not animals that they should browse through their little day content with food and drink. They are torn by questionings; like Prometheus they lie chained to the rocks while winged imaginings gnaw at their vitals. Life would become meagre and pitiable but for the sublime ideals that lure the mind to expectancy while they sustain heroic endeavors. God is the soul's star, the mind's necessary food.

And belief in a loving Father is no less necessary for the healing of a self accusing conscience. That is the true light which lighteth every man,—but its rays disclose many unlovely things. New standards come into view which make old selfishness seem ugly.

What can sustain the spirit in its battle with the lower self but a calm sure faith in God's good will and His great purpose to lift every sincere spirit to the heights of manhood.

We have tapped a fresh vein of power today by thinking of this loving Father not as wholly exterior to our own lives, but as weaving His own Being mysteriously into the very fibres of our own human lives. Not by abasement of self but by assertion of our noblest selves do we avail ourselves of the love of God. That love is not a good will directed from without toward us, it is a stream of power making for sound strong personality within us. Our best impulses are to be interpreted in no less wondrous terms than as the life of the eternal God seeking to express himself afresh through the personalities of His Sons and Daughters. There is a dignity here that has mighty power to break old shackles from a human mind and set it free.

Who can describe the charm or measure the power of the Kingdom idea in human thinking today? We observe the world in tumult. Ancient tyrannies are crumbling under a fierce new pressure from below. The masses have awakened; they have found their strength. Privileges, rights and authorities are being tested in the terrific heat of a passionate sense of the big human values. The common man is King. On a score of fronts the world over the war is waging for larger rights for the common people. It is a grim and bloody fight, with many a brutal lapse from the rules of the game on both sides, but the heart of the struggle is the protest against human exploitation, the demand that every life shall have a chance to de-

velop its powers to the utmost. Inasmuch it is the strong leaven of the Kingdom that is at work; it is the yeasty ferment of the Brotherhood of Jesus that is bursting the old forms asunder. Who can not mark the signs of its coming? Mr. Benjamin Kidd asserts that a new process in social evolution can be seen to have started with the Advent of Jesus Christ, viz., the sacrifice of the present for the sake of the future, which apart from Christianity has no rational sanction whatsoever. This revolution in the moral history of the world, he says, has obtained a practical recognition in the consciousness of civilized humanity through the doctrine and influence of Jesus Christ. "We see the Hebrew spirit," so he writes, "rising in superior and eloquent scorn to all the works of an existing world based on force. In the vision of universal justice, which haunts the consciousness of the Jewish people throughout its history, it is the poor, the oppressed, the fallen, the weak, and the disinherited, that become all that the gifted, the noble, the darling aristocrat of strength and perfection are to the Greek. We follow this conception in Jewish history till it grows greater than the nation, greater than all its present, greater than the race itself: till, associated at last with an Ideal of self-subordination and self-abnegation which has burst all the bounds of the present and the material, while it has become touched with the profoundest quality of human emotion, it goes forth in the first century of our era to subdue that world in which the ascendancy of the present has reached its culminating form of expression."

Mr. J. Keir Hardie, in an address upon "Religion and the Labour Movement," said: "A test question

both for men and movements is, 'What think ye of Christ?' Is He merely a figment of the imagination? Or was He a living, divinely-inspired Personality? And what relation have Christ's teachings to the needs, the spiritual needs, of the individual, and to the social problems of the age in which we live? . . . To the Socialist and Labour-man in particular Christ's teaching should appeal with irresistible power. He belongs to us in a special degree. . . . If I were called upon to define Christianity in a single sentence, I would say that Christianity represents 'sacrifice having its origin in love.' And the Christian who professes the Christian faith is thereby under obligation to make whatever sacrifice may be necessary to remove sin, suffering, and injustice from the lives of those around him. . . . To those of you who are in the Christian Churches I would say—don't let yourselves be driven out; remain inside, and make the Church more worthy of Christ than it has been. Those of you who are outside the Church—try to be followers of Christ in actuality, if not in name. By working together, whether inside or outside the organized Church, we shall be serving Him Who loved us, and loved us so much that He gave His life for us."

Mr. Arthur Henderson, in an address upon the same topic: "Take the teaching of Jesus Christ with regard to the value of human life. . . . Let us get back to the simplicity of the Master's own teaching, back to His own words upon the point. If we Labour-men will only do that, there is nothing in His teaching which will impress us so much as this—that it seemed to be the essential object of His Incarnation to impress the world in all ages with the high value of that hu-

man life which He came to redeem; a value associated with that life, not for what it had, but because of what it was. . . . Now, what is the object of the whole of the vast machinery now controlled by the organized Labour Movement? It is to assist in the realization of the highest possible human life, because we are impressed with the value of human life, as was the Christ Himself."

Now concerning the form of these various declarations there will be a variety of opinions but concerning the spirit of them, and indeed the essential ideas to which they give expression I may venture to say that they fit in with the Master's teaching, and belong in that ever lengthening appendix to the sermon on the mount which lovers of their fellows have written and are writing in this day by their words and their works.

I have called it the Kingdom because the Master called it that. Of course it is not strictly a Kingdom. The Kings are passing and with them will pass the phraseology of arbitrary rule and even of benevolent paternalism. It is a brotherhood for which the Master gave His life; it is a great democracy of free spirits that He sought to found. To that order God suits Himself with sublime adaptability, for He rules it not from a lofty throne but by His indwelling as truth and justice in the humblest mind. From the lowly no less frequently than from the exalted have come the impulses and the insights that have broadened the borders of the new order and nourished its inmost life. By His identification with His children regardless of caste or privilege God has made Himself the supreme democrat of all. And Christ's tem-

per indicates a brotherhood not a Kingdom. He was clothed in no dignity save that of character and He knew no law but love. When He wished to illustrate in an unforgettable way the spirit that ruled Him and that was to be the sign of the new order He girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet.

I repeat that no one can measure the charm or the power of the Kingdom idea. It is the most vital and germinal idea in human thinking today.

I wish now to relate the simple Christian conviction of the Lordship of Jesus to two main movements of modern thought and to build up a new doctrinal formulation. It can of course be barely suggestive, not complete.

Here is the critical study of Scriptures, both Old and New Testament. The Bible under the process becomes a different book. It has taken form at different periods under different cultures, and differing religious conceptions. It is a composite. Some of it has little value for our time. At once the faith of some becomes unsettled. They have no divine revelation left, if they must accept this *relative* scale of values. And yet there gleams in the pages of this book an expanding religious and moral ideal. If it begins with crude ideas of God it goes on to the lofty presentation of Deity that an Isaiah or a Hosea sets forth; if selfish vicious conduct in its earliest pages seems to have the divine approval, the book nevertheless gives us in its latest portions such sublime expression of duty as gleam in the pages of an Amos or a Jeremiah. But no theory of how scripture came to be can mar the portrait of Jesus as He was. And no theory of inspiration can disturb the appeal that He



will always make to men and women to follow Him as Master of life, and the sure builder of a new order in the world.

How does our Christian conviction of the Lordship of Christ fit in with the theory of evolution that holds sway over such large areas of human thinking in our time? One must say there are impressive affinities between the simple expression of Christ's Lordship and the modern evolutionary theory. St. John's doctrine of the indwelling Word is a very natural starting point for a modern mind to begin its formulation of a doctrine of Christ. For we believe not in a power that has made the world and set it going and that resides outside of it, but we believe in an indwelling directive energy. We believe not in a God who manifests himself once in a while by interfering with the natural order but in the God who is the intelligence within that marvelous natural order. But it is not an order of stones and trees and flowers alone. It is an order of human consciousness and of ethical sensitiveness. It is an order of moral heroes and religious saints who love their fellows and serve them, who believe in eternal life and die in the consciousness that they possess it. It needs Jesus to crown all that we know of this marvellous natural order so instinct at its core with moral values and spiritual principles.

“All tended to mankind  
And man produced all had its end thus far:  
But incompleted man begins anew,  
A tendency to God. Prognostics told  
Man's near approach; so in man's self arise  
August anticipations, symbols, types  
Of a dim splendour ever on before.  
In that eternal circle run by life.”

The evolutionary theory confronted by this matchless life can only find in Him the culmination of those manifold suggestions of spiritual meanings that gleam at different stages of the creative process. But now that a completely spiritualized life has been manifested we behold strange new hints of higher ranges still of conscious existence.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Influence of Greek Philosophy upon Early Christianity, Hatch.  
History of Dogma, Harnack.  
What is Christianity, Harnack.  
Foundations, by Seven Oxford Men.  
The Continuity of Religious Thought, Allen.  
Contentio Veritatis, Six Oxford Tutors.  
The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, McIntosh.  
Cambridge Biblical Essays, Edited by Swete.

## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF MAN

EDWIN A. RALPH

IN AN INSPIRED moment of long ago, some lover of life asked of his God the earnest question, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" As the ages have rolled along, this same earnest question has been asked by men awed by the vastness of the universe and yet impressed by the qualities of human life and mystified by its perennial insistence upon its own place of importance in the world. The answers have been many and varied, ranging all the way from the assuring answer won by the first questioner who concluded that God had made man but little lower than Himself and crowned him with glory and honor, to the answer of gloom and despair that found lodgment in the minds of some men who deduced from the vision of the vastness of the world the conviction of the unimportance of man.

In our own day, the question of old lacks nothing of its original force; countless men are asking it, and seeking to find an answer that squares with the facts and satisfies the yearnings of their hearts. Scientist, historian, and religionist are busy at the task of finding the whole truth about man and assigning to him his proper place in the life of the world. However much human life may have suffered from inattention in days gone by, it is receiving its full share of attention today, as men with different interests bring their skilled minds to the study of man.

The biologist is concerned to discover the physical facts, and searches back into remote yesterdays for

man's origin. He wants to know whence he came and how he has reached his present estate. And the result of his studies is given to us in the evolutionary theory that accounts for the rise of man from the lowest stage to his present high standing. The historian is concerned to discover and narrate the events that have taken place during the long centuries, and to give a complete account of the rise of man from the early forms of expression to the complex civilization of today; to outline his ideas from the crude notions of the earliest days to the rather constructive thinking of our own times. He, too, outlines an evolutionary process in accordance with which human life has made its determined way forward and upward in the scale of living. The psychologist has an interest in discovering the secrets of man's receptive and expressive life. He busies himself with studies of the mental processes and seeks to discover how it happens that human life acts as it does in any given case. It is a great and absorbing, and shall we say endless task with which the psychologist finds himself confronted. And there is something about the bigness of it, and the variety of it, that begets within us the conclusion that human life is no small thing, but one of the greatest things to which our thoughts can find their way. And so it happens that the biologist, the historian and the psychologist all add greatly to our appreciation of the strength and grandeur of human life.

The biologist does not give a complete story of human life; neither does the historian, nor the psychologist; it is not within the scope of their particular interests to do so. There are human values

with which the biologist does not deal; nor are they dealt with by the historian or the psychologist; they do not happen to lie within their fields. Hence it follows that we must seek farther for the completion of the story of human life. Nothing could be more detrimental to our task of finding the complete story of human life than stopping with the findings of the scientists, except failing to use their findings as part of the complete story, and as stepping-stones to the understanding of the rest of it. Much of the confusion of our day is due to the decision of some scientists to stop the inquiry at the end of their findings, and the refusal of some Christians to use the highway that the scientists build. A sufficiently passionate interest in learning the full story of man will lead us, one and all, along whatever highways are available, clear to the end of every search in every field.

The Christian idea is in no way opposed to the idea of the scientist. It does not come into normal conflict with it. It is another idea, which, added to the ideas gleaned in other fields, gives us the relatively complete story for which we are seeking. It is as a distinct contribution to the full understanding of human life that it is presented for consideration.

The Christian idea of man has to do with human values. Not with the origin of life, but with the value of each and every man; not with how he responds to various stimuli, but with how he ought to respond to moral ideals; not with what he has done, but with what he ought to do; not with his achievements, but with his possibilities; not alone with his own resources, but also with the Resources, not his

own, that operate within him, and help to make him what he is.

The emphasis, first of all, is on the inestimable worth of the individual life.

Nothing is more distinctive in the teachings of Jesus than his tributes to the worth of human life, and nothing stands out more prominently in his example than his fine regard for the intrinsic values in the lives of all the people with whom he came in contact. Paralleling his teaching of the Fatherliness of God was his teaching of the worth of human life to God. No echo of the scepticism of human values that was prevalent in his day found its way into the teachings of Jesus; and no foundation for the disparaging conceptions and preachments of the Middle Ages, or of our own time, can be found in a single word that Jesus uttered or in a single attitude that he assumed. The whole basis of his mission was the worth of human life, and the sufficient justification for his deep interest in the outcasts of society was the conviction of the economic demand of God for the saving of every human value. It was his business to seek and to save the lost; God's world could not tolerate losses; the saving of human values was the cause of rejoicing in a world whose God was bent upon building His kingdom among men. As uplifting and cheering as is the Christian idea of a God who loves, is the Christian idea of life that is worth loving.

The Christian idea of man also stresses the responsiveness of man to the call of God. As there is something in the steel that enables it to respond to the drawing power of the magnet, so there is something in human life that enables it to respond to the draw-

ing power of God. Whatever the process of salvation may be, the basis of it lies not alone in the heart of God, but also in the life of man. Nothing in the teachings of Jesus suggests the hopelessness of human life, the inability of men to work out their own salvation, to come to themselves, to make their way to God; on the contrary, he regularly appealed to the responsive powers in the lives of men,—“Come unto me”; “Go and sin no more”; “Follow me”; his faith in men’s ability thus to respond to the appeal of God was the ripened fruit of his assurance of their intrinsic worth. There is a teaching that calls itself Christian that revels in discounting the moral qualities of the natural man, in utterly contrasting to the sad disadvantage of human life, the powers of Christ and the hopelessness of man. One wonders where in the Gospel story the slightest suggestion for such a teaching is to be found. The Christian idea is not that man has fallen away or fallen low, and because of his having fallen is in a hopeless condition; but rather this, that however far away man has drifted, or however low he has fallen, there are within him powers that enable him to respond to the call of God; that however far down in the scale of living he may be, there are within him powers that make possible his full response to the call of the ideal that looms up on his horizon. The Christian agrees with Elbert Hubbard, that “there is a power within ourselves that makes for righteousness”. In so far as we give rein to this power within us that makes for righteousness, that enables us to respond, we become creators together with God of our own best selves.

The Christian idea of man goes farther: it makes

much of the inherent possibilities of life: there is no end to what man can do, to what he can become. It was perfectly natural for Jesus to insist that the program for human life was very large. How else could he gauge life, with his conception of its worth, and his faith in its powers of response? To very ordinary men who later set the world on fire with passionate devotion to ideals, he opened wide the Gates of the Kingdom with these words: "Ye shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"; "The works that I do, shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do." Which is to say, that Jesus spoke in the terms of the limitless possibilities of human life, spurring life on to the fulfillment of its hopes in the building of a perfect character, and charging it with the responsibility for doing the work that makes men builders together with God of that Kingdom towards which all the evolutionary processes of the world work. This was not common doctrine in the days of Jesus; it is none too common even today; it is important, however, that we understand that it was Jesus' idea, and that it is the Christian idea with which our thinking is enriched today.

This idea embodied the conception of the possibility of the union of human life with the life of God, a possibility that has been stressed all too little since the days of Jesus. This represents the maximum of achievement, no doubt, but it is fully within Jesus' conception of that which is possible. It is wholly sensible that the vital God who lives in this world should make it possible for the men whom He summons to His assistance, to reach that identity of purpose with His own, and that dignity of character, and



that love of creating values that would automatically unite them to Himself, make them "one with Him" as Jesus was one with Him.

There is this content, too, in the Christian idea of man: he is the *via media* for the will of God; through him God operates; through him, God makes His will known, His purposes carry, His love create. Just as no idea of Jesus is complete that does not include the presence of God in his life, so no idea of man's life is complete that does not include the presence of God in his life. Just as the Spirit of God operated in the life of Jesus, and made him equal to all the possibilities of life, so the Spirit of God operates in our lives and makes us equal to all the possibilities with which our human lives are endowed. This does not mean that God is our substitute, nor that we are mere clay in His hands; but it does mean that God in human life is a value added to our own; it means that God in human life quickens the responsive powers of our natures; it means that God in human life stirs within us the passion to fulfill the hopes of life, to develop our possibilities to the full, and to form that union of mind and will with Him that will enable Him to accomplish in this world that which He can do only through the services of human lives, and that will enable us to experience the joy of creating together with God the world in which we live with Him.

This is one small part, at least, of the Christian idea of man: he is of inestimable intrinsic worth; he is naturally noble rather than ignoble. He is naturally responsive to the call of God; to make his way to the Father is the most natural thing he does. He is endowed with the possibility of attaining perfection of

character, and forming an active unity of life and purpose with God. He is a spiritual and moral being, in whom God lives and through whom God expresses Himself, and by whom God accomplishes His purposes in the world.

The modern Christian is under an immense debt of gratitude to the modern scientists, who, by their study of life along physical and psychical lines, have contributed to him a new sense of the greatness and importance of man, and have put in his hands tools to use in discovering for himself the Christian view of life. On the other hand, the Christian contributes to the scientists and to the world at large, a conception of human life that presents man, not as a mere animal, not as a mere machine, not as a being divorced from the Spirit that actuates this world, but as a being who contains within himself mighty values, noble impulses, unmeasured spiritual resources, and a moral will to unite all that he has and all that he is with the God of this world for life's creative purposes.

Anyone who looks the life of today squarely in the face, and thinks twice about the present day task, is impressed by the immensity of the task in hand and the seriousness of the situation in which the world finds itself. While we are searching for a way through the difficulties to the clearer fields of a brighter day, let us not be unmindful of the immense value for just the emergencies of the present hour that inheres in men's proper appraisal of their own lives. James Harvey Robinson in "*The Mind in the Making*" says pointedly, "If some magical transformation could be produced in men's ways of looking at themselves and their fellows, no inconsiderable part of the evils that

now afflict society would vanish away or remedy themselves automatically." It is always true that this world depends for its light and peace and leadership upon great lives, upon men who have a fine sense of the worth of their lives to the age in which they live, and have skill in effective performance in behalf of civilization. Let us note that Jesus coupled with his commission to men to go out into the world and redeem it, a clean-cut conception of the greatness and dignity of human life. And let us be sure that we best condition men for rendering the service that the world needs to have rendered, when we drive deep into their minds the conviction that their lives are essentially noble and resourceful, that the natural performance of men lies in the direction of whole-hearted response to the call of sane ideals, and that the highest privilege they will ever have is to unite their strength to that of God in advancing the cause of righteousness in this world. To no higher task than finding and heralding a cheering, uplifting, Christian idea of human life that will stir life to the depths, can we possibly dedicate our thinking.

## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF SALVATION

GILBERT S. COX

A MORE complete and definite statement of this theme might clarify the material and method of this paper. What is the content of the idea of salvation for the modern Christian?

Like every other great Christian doctrine, it roots back in the Old Testament. It is used there largely with the sense of deliverance. This applies both to the nation and to the individual. A few instances will illustrate this. Exodus XIV, 13. Moses commanded the children of Israel to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord", for they should see the Egyptian "no more for ever". I Samuel XIV, 45. The Lord "wrought a great salvation" through David who risked his life to slay the Philistine. The Psalmist in 14 and 53, seeing the iniquity and godlessness of the people who surrounded him cries, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion". Habakkuk III, 8 speaks of the "horses and chariots of salvation". This idea of national deliverance was caught up by Mary the Mother of Jesus when she sang of the coming Savior. Luke I, 51. "He hath scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree". Zacharias took the gift of his son as a divine sign of "the hour of salvation". Luke I, 71 "That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us". Simeon and Anna saw in the child Jesus the salvation of God—"A glory to thy people Israel". A fulfillment of the ancient

promise of deliverance and a vindication to, Luke II, 38, "all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem". John the Baptist began preaching that—Luke III, 6, "every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill made low, the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places made smooth and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

In a less conspicuous way the word is used of individual deliverance, chiefly from enemies, trouble, sickness, and death. The Psalmist says, 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear"—"though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear". Psalm 62:2 and 6, "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be moved".

The very name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Jeho-shua or Joshua which means, "Jehovah is my deliverer". And the other name by which he is so often called, Savior, has the same meaning. When Jesus preached His first sermon He showed how His ministry was vitally connected with this Old Testament idea, Luke 4:18-19, "He hath anointed me to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord". He also said of Himself, Luke 19:10 "The Son of man is come to seek and save that which is lost", and again, John 12:47, "For I came not to judge the world but to save the world". After it is seen that this is the primary meaning of the use of the word it is possible to empty it of its real purport. It can be so distorted as to destroy His mission. We can

even repeat the terms Jesus used and so misinterpret them as to make void His whole message.

This is well illustrated by His own contemporaries. With their historical background it is easy to see why the great national hope of the restoration of Israel was revived at the beginning of His ministry. His disciples looked for it during His whole ministry. They put that content into His Messiahship after His death. The two discouraged men on the way to Emmaus said, Luke 24:21, "We trusted that it had been He which should have restored Israel". After His resurrection the disciples renewed their hope, Acts 1:6, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel". But He did not come to bring that kind of deliverance, He was more interested in the Kingdom of God than in any national kingdom.

The tendency since Jesus' day has been to narrow His salvation to some particular hope or creed. If we were to formulate a definition today from the preaching and teaching of those evangelists who claim to be salvation specialists and champions of the "pure gospel" it might be put in this sentence—Salvation is the spiritual or moral deliverance of the individual from the eternal consequences of sin. We are saved from our sins to escape hell and gain heaven. Now that sounds familiar and seems perfectly self evident. There are three ideas in this sentence, first, salvation is spiritual and moral; second, it has its goal in eternity; third, that it is a personal matter. Now this whole content is false because it is only a half truth. The best way to find what Jesus really meant is to watch Him as He goes about bringing salvation to the world.

### I. Is salvation a spiritual deliverance only?

Jesus comes to the pool of Bethesda and among the multitude of the sick who are there for healing, He is attracted by a man who had an infirmity thirty-eight years, His challenge is—"Wilt thou be made whole?" When the man arose and carried away his bed, the Jews accused Him of breaking the Sabbath. He falls back upon the command of the One who made him whole as his authority, John 5:14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple and said unto him, "behold thou art made whole, sin no more". Now just when Jesus had made him whole or whether the first deliverance was spiritual or physical or which was the more important is not the argument. The point is, that he was made whole both physically and spiritually. If this is the occurrence to which Jesus refers in John 7:23 it makes it the more clear that He has done enough for the man when He claims to have made one "every whit whole on the Sabbath day".

Jesus used this term, wholeness, interchangeably; sometimes signifying spiritual and others physical deliverance. When the Scribes and Pharisees murmured against Him for eating with Publicans and Sinners His answer was, Luke 5:31, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick". When the woman is healed by touching the border of His garment she is told, Luke 8:48, "Be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole". When the leper returns to give thanks for his healing he is pronounced whole because of his faith.

This same idea was carried out by the disciples who first went out to preach at the command of Jesus. Luke 9:2, "He sent them to preach the Kingdom of

God and to heal the sick," their authority was over both devils and diseases. When the seventy returned with the joy of success because they could heal the sick, Luke 10:18, "even the devils were subject through His name." Jesus says "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven". This was the beginning of the victories of the Kingdom of God.

How different all this sounds when compared with the teaching of the essential sinfulness of the flesh. Saints of the ascetic type of mind have always tried to escape the evil influences of the body by punishing it. They have sought salvation by fasting, flagellation, lying on beds of nails. Wholeness does not lie in that direction. There is no essential antithesis between flesh and spirit if one has full salvation. "The word became flesh" says John, and the strong virile body of Jesus was a part of the wonder of His life. Paul who seems to lend authority to this "warfare" of flesh and spirit also speaks of the body as "the temple of the Holy Spirit", that our bodies are to be presented living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God."

Browning decries the saint who complainingly says, "spite of this flesh today I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole" rather "as the bird wings and sings let us say, all good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul".

The modern world is favorable to this Christian view. The old deistic philosophy which made a sharp distinction between God and the world which thought in dualistic terms is gone. The more sane and helpful metaphysics of this day finds God in this world as its ever living source. God and nature are not two opposed entities. "In Him we live, move and have our



being." So God may manifest His will and purpose in and through our flesh. The immanence of God helps us to see that the body is also sacred.

Modern psychology has made amazing confirmation of the relation of the spirit and flesh. It has been demonstrated beyond doubt that much of sickness comes from wrong mental habits. Fear, anger, worry bring a train of physical concomitants. And it is no secret that the opposite is also true that delinquency, ill temper, low mentality, and many other problems of youth have a physical explanation. Students of industrial accidents know about the fatal three o'clock hour when fatigue plays its dreadful role in mine, shop and factory. The rather crude formula of the rescue mission is well to the point—"soup—soap, salvation". The phenomenon of conversion, the religious awakening, in the period of adolescence, certainly has its vital relation to the physical development. It would surprise the philosopher, the biologist, the psychologist, to be told that they are instruments of salvation, that they belong to the redeemers of the race, but such they are. The pity is that the preacher has not long ago called to his assistance the services of all men and institutions making for the wholeness of life. Science and religion must join hands for the redemption of the race. Philosophy, psychology, biology, eugenics, the home, the school, the community, the church, may all be instruments of the deliverance which Christ brings to body and spirit. Again the argument is not which is first in importance. There are saints like Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Sidney Lanier who have never known a day without pain, and there are splendid animals "whose flesh has soul

to suit". But who would dare say that the handicap of sickness is necessary or desirable or that Jesus who called Himself the "great Physician" did not heal both body and soul.

II. Are men lost only in hell or saved only in heaven?

An examination of the teaching of Jesus will show an amazingly small amount of emphasis upon the future life.

He announced His purpose "to seek and to save that which was lost" not that which would be lost. His great word of hope spoken to Zacchaeus was, Luke 19:9 "This day salvation is come to this house". There was to be no waiting for some future day or revelation, he had salvation.

The story of the prodigal ends with the joyful words, "my son was lost, he is found". His teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven being a present reality further develops this point. It was not only an inheritance long prepared but a present dynamic. Like leaven exploding its way into the whole lump. Like a seed, small to be sure, but having the power of growth until it should attain great strength. Like new wine so full of ferment that to try to put it in old bottles might cause the loss of both the bottles and the wine.

Jesus' words also as recorded in John indicate a different conception of His gifts to men. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Again He put this in the striking saying at the grave of Lazarus, John 11:25-26, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet should

he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die". John is just as vivid in his great statement, I John 5:12, "He that hath the Son hath life". Paul experienced this fundamental truth when he found Christ, II Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature". Again in Galatians 2:20, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me".

Wherever we look we find the New Testament views life as a unit. The Kingdom of God begins just where men are, the salvation Jesus brought was a present, living, dynamic. A principle and power which changed the whole horizon, a rebirth which opened the eyes to the values of the Kingdom of God. It was not confined to this present life or to the future, it was in both. It is not an "either or" proposition, it is "both and", it was "the life".

The modern man is not interested in some invention to keep him out of hell or to get him into heaven. If he has any intellectual life he is very wary of the vivid descriptions of the future condition of life. So much of the dogmatic teaching on such questions is without Biblical foundation and to be metaphysically conceived requires a stretch of the imagination. The "lake of fire" has lost its terror for more than the intellectual of our day. As Chaplain Studdert Kennedy says, "I am not the least bit afraid of going to hell, but I am horribly afraid that a day will come when someone will look me in the eye and say, 'well, and what did you make of it?'" That has a moral and ethical appeal. The "Jesus paid it all" variety of appeal to enter heaven has lost its vitality with this generation and rightly so. Selfishness is the stock out of which any brew of sin may be made and "enlightened

selfishness" is still selfishness, the very antithesis of the appeal of Jesus. Luke 9:23, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me". Instead of that as Ruskin says "this has been exactly reversed by modern Protestantism, which sees in the cross, not a furca to which it is to be nailed, but a raft on which it and all its valuable properties are to be floated into Paradise".

The crushing problem of our day is not to keep men out of hell but to keep hell out of men. It is not to conduct men into heaven but to get a few of the glories of the new Jerusalem to come "down out of heaven".

This is no argument against the sense of immortality, it is only saying with this as with the physical and spiritual if salvation is to be complete we must think of its larger and more Christian meaning and content and include both the present and future. We affirm the transcendence of the Kingdom, it is "not of this world" but it may be in this world. We affirm the organic union of the Kingdom. The glory of our salvation is that we may here and now "know in part" and rest in the validity of that knowledge. We may only live on an hidden shore of the expansive sea but our partial knowledge is true of all. The complete view would be "only vaster". We fall back upon the eternal values of present experience.

Therefore says Paul—faith, hope, love abideth, and he might have added humility, courage, service and all the other living qualities of the Kingdom of God.

III. Is salvation a personal matter only?

Did Jesus come to deliver a few individuals, "to

pluck a few brands from the burning", or was His mission in any way to affect institutions? Is the "good news" personal or is it social? We answer, both, either one without the other is a failure and a falsehood.

As we watch Jesus saving men it is easy to discover the double meaning of the experience and His requirements. Salvation is a personal matter with the social test. The proposition is well put by Rauschenbusch, "sin is not a private transaction between the sinner and God. Humanity always crowds the audience room when God holds court." Humanity must also crowd the audience room when men are saved. When Jesus went into the house of Zaccheus "to seek and save that which was lost" He found a selfish man, rich at the expense of his neighbors. When He came away He left Zaccheus ready to repay his neighbors and to give away one half of his goods. This said Jesus was salvation. This is not an isolated case. When Moses saw the burning bush and turned aside to talk with God it was to settle whether or not he was willing to become the savior of his people. When Isaiah saw the glory of God in the temple he realized that his own lips were unclean and he had a vision of the social sin in which he lived. The voice of God challenged him to consecrate himself to the salvation of the nation. After Paul's conversion we cease to hear much about strict Phariseeism and much about a love that overleaps the bounds of sex, of class, of nation. When John Wesley had failed to find satisfaction trying to save his own soul he writes, "the Bible knows nothing of a solitary religion". It is little wonder he became the social savior of his day. Jesus stressed the same

duality when he said there were two great commandments—love to God, and love to the neighbor, and that they were alike. He followed this great pronouncement with that remarkable illustration of the “Good Samaritan”, indicating beyond question that even the leaders of religion who had lost their social vision did not belong to His Kingdom.

His effort is not only to save individuals by awakening the social enthusiasm but His supreme effort was given to building the “beloved community”. He began this experiment at Capernaum. This was the commercial center of his country. Out of this fraternity would radiate an influence not only to Palestine but through the commercial trade routes to the ends of the civilized world. It was here that he chose his workers and began his conquest of social service. Here it was that many “mighty deeds” were done to make His plan succeed. But as he leaves, his “reproach” is to the whole city and its environs, “woe to thee Chorazin! woe to thee Bethsaida!—and thou Capernaum shalt go down to Hades!

We know too that Jesus had hopes of a national salvation. When He enters Jerusalem on that last fatal week, coming around the shoulder of the hill on the road above the city, he sees its glittering temple and splendid homes. His consciousness of the nation’s great refusal, represented in the continued hostility of Jerusalem, wrings from His heart these tragic words, Luke 13:34, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and that stones those who are sent to her! How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not.”

There are many considerations which make this more complete idea of salvation vital for today.

We are confronted with the break down of the supposed Christian nations. The second century said "behold how these Christians loved one another," the twentieth century heathen look on in disgust and say "behold how these Christians hate one another." In other words if what we have had is salvation we are lost. It is evident we need a new kind of a Christian. The Czar and the Kaiser were both devout men, good church-men. We have had too many good men who have taken John Bunyan's "Pilgrim" for their model. But the "City of Destruction" is not to be abandoned but saved. We are to stay until we are crucified if we are followers of Christ. We give evidence of our redemption by redeeming. If we refuse we are, Matthew 5:13, "good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot by men".

A driver for an industrial magnate is quoted as saying of his employer—"he is an angel at home and a devil in business". There are so many angels at home, or church, who are devils in business, politics, government, and international relations. This is the real double standard. "By their fruits ye shall know them." We have had a good deal of intensive piety but not much extensive Christianity. Rauschenbusch says, "a religious experience is not Christian unless it binds us closer to men and commits us more deeply to the Kingdom of God." Fitch says, "an absence of the sense of responsibility for the social order has from the beginning, maimed and distorted Protestant Christianity". If we are to challenge the youth and idealism of our day it can be best done by the appeal to

such a crusade. The cry "to make the world safe" stirred the world, the cry to bring in the Kingdom will enlist the bravest and best. Only the hesitating and cowardly will be appealed to to save themselves, the courageous will lose their lives for other's sake. In this endeavor they find fellowship with men and comradeship with Christ.

There is a new sense of solidarity in the world. No man any longer "liveth to himself". The world with its ignorance, poverty and sin is at our doors. We are members one of the other. Mr. F. Ernest Johnson in a recent booklet calls attention to the fact that the very mark of our personality is social. We come to the sense of personality through human associations. We see the futility of a complete deliverance without the saved group in which to live. For a long while we tried to combat the saloon by having individuals sign the total abstinence pledges. But the system produced new recruits faster than the temperance forces could rescue the victims. Victory will only come when we do away with the organized traffic. Too long we have been a sort of an ambulance following in the train of slavery, war, pagvanized industry, and international rivalry, content to gather up the dead and wounded. Some day we will attack the system itself. We will try to convert the pirates so that there will be no more men beaten and robbed by the roadside.

We realize too that a community is more than the individuals in it. It is no stronger than the individuals who compose it, but the individual multiplies his strength by co-operation. "The strength of the pack is the wolf—the strength of the wolf is the pack." One shall chase a thousand and two, ten thousand.



Certain sins go out of fashion, are killed by social neglect. Jesus gave the world new values. The great ones in His Kingdom were to be the servants of all. Perhaps we have here the secret of the power of the kingdom of evil and the hope of the Kingdom of God. The goal of the work of Christ then, or salvation would be, perfect men in a perfect social order, the final establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Nothing has been said about the method of appropriating salvation or its source. In the light of the previous discussion it will be evident that all institutional, ritualistic or ceremonial means, however elaborate, beautiful or scriptural, must take a secondary place in producing Christian salvation. It will also be evident to the reader that any theory of the saving work of Christ must have an ethical content. All conceptions of what takes place in the mind of God, of forensic scenes, of governmental adjustments, of imputed righteousness, must be considered as the more or less truthful speculations and attempts of various men of different ages to express a great truth, namely that, "by grace, we are saved through faith". That is, if we mean by grace, the love of God seeking us out and giving Himself for us, so that it is not on account of any virtue or good deeds, we can purchase our salvation, but that it is the free gift of God. And if by faith we mean not the acceptance of creeds, for "the devils also believe and tremble" and remain devils still, but a full, free, volitional and filial surrender to God, issuing in a life of obedience and trust.

It also ought to be remarked that the recrudescence of premillennialism, with its proposed cataclysmic

destruction of civilization and an imperial reign of a monarch, has nothing in common with a spiritual and moral conception of the Kingdom of God. This vain notion is, non-moral, non-scriptural, and out of harmony with the whole tenor of the teachings and life of Christ. It takes no account of the great modern faith that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs", a faith in harmony with both reason and revelation.

Note: The writer is especially indebted to the following articles and books for material in this paper:

Hasting's Bible Dictionary—Salvation

Hasting's Dictionary of Christ and Gospels—Salvation

Hasting's Dictionary of Religion and Ethics—Salvation

"The Christian Doctrine of Salvation"—Stevens

"A Theology for the Social Gospel"—Rauschenbusch

"Studies in Christianity"—Bowne

"The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus"—Kent

"The New Orthodoxy"—Ames

"Social Evangelism"—Ward

"The Proposal of Jesus"—Hutton

"What Must the Church Do to Be Saved"—Tittle

"The Reconstruction of Religion"—Ellwood

"The Fundamentals of Christianity"—Vedder

"The Social Gospel and Personal Religion"—Johnson

## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF PRAYER

SIDNEY E. SWEET

TRUTH is unchangeable. Our understanding of truth varies as man discovers more of the methods by which God works, and our application of truth varies as man realizes more fully the purpose for which God created him. The earth has always been round, though for countless centuries man was ignorant of this fact. Matter has always been kinetic, although it has been believed to be static by most human beings who have lived upon the earth. The laws of the world, which have been discovered by scientists, have always been operating, even though unknown or dimly understood by the vast majority of the human race. Thinking that things are so does not necessarily make them so, and wrong ideas of the world do not alter the truth. In the physical world it is very easy to see this,—in the spiritual world it is none the less true, though it seems more difficult to make the truth clear. God has always been the same, although men have held varying and crude ideas of Him during the centuries. The moral laws of God are unchangeable, even though many conceptions of morality have existed at different periods in history.

The value of prayer has not changed. It has been and always will be the same power, but man's understanding of prayer, as of other great forces in the world has enlarged and been altered, as man has learned more of God and His ways. Therefore, we shall commence our study of the Christian idea of

prayer, by emphasizing the importance of avoiding certain mechanical misconceptions of prayer.

Prayer is not a miraculous force which we can employ to persuade God to break the laws of the universe. We do not pray because we want to tell God how to run the world. If we are Christians, we believe in an intelligent God, who has made the laws of the world for the good of mankind. We do not dare to think that we know better than He does, how to direct, control, and operate this tremendous universe. It would be presumptuous beyond words for us to conceive that the purpose of our prayers is to coax God to act according to our judgment rather than according to His own. The laws of the world were made by One who is infinitely wiser than we, and it is for us to learn these laws and to live in harmony with them. If these laws ever become inoperative, there will be chaos and destruction. If God changed the laws of the world in an arbitrary manner or as a result of the pleading of His children, then it would be impossible to learn God's ways and methods of working, and there could be no intellectual progress for the human race. God is not the weak parent, who forsakes the right and wise course, because it is easier to yield to the teasing of a child.

And when I have emphasized this truth, the unchangeableness of God's laws because God is an intelligent Being and a personal Being, on whom we can depend to act in the same way under the same conditions, because of His infinite wisdom and love,—then it is apparent that there is, and can be, no real conflict between Science and Religion. It is the business of science to experiment and discover the facts

of the universe and the laws which operate in the world. It is the business of religion to interpret these facts and laws, as they reveal God, and as they disclose the way in which men can best live together in harmony with each other and with God. The scientist studies processes of creation. Religion emphasizes that there is a Personality behind these processes, as there is an architect behind the mechanical processes of house building, and an engineer behind the mechanical processes of bridge building. Religion must not seek to hinder the discovery of the scientific facts of the universe, for by so doing it not only places itself in opposition to the truth which is of God, but it also makes it impossible fully to know God and His way, which is the purpose of religion. Christianity and Science are mutually helpful. Science discovers, examines and classifies facts, and thus seeks to know the universe as it is. It is an imperfect witness because its investigations are incomplete and because there is danger of accepting premature conclusions. Both of these imperfections are inevitable. The field is boundless and the application of scientific methods to the study of it has just begun. Concerning the constitution of men, physical and mental science are witnesses, biology, physiology, anthropology, etc.; concerning the universe, natural science speaks in geology, astronomy and a host of other branches of study. It is not the business of religion to determine the facts of the universe—that is the province of science—but when the conclusions of science are established, then religion must receive these facts with the reverence that it has for all truth, and freely make room for them in its scheme of thought. Science discovers facts by means of experimentation. Re-

ligion evaluates these facts, finds the meaning of them and relates them to the life of men and God. The more science learns of the facts, the size of the universe, the age of the universe, the inter-relation of all the facts, the larger becomes the conception of God in the mind of the Christian and the more humble become the scientists, as they realize how much they do not know. The more that scientists learn of the laws of God and their dependability, the better for religion. The more religion interprets these laws, so that men may know God and His will, the better for scientists and for the world. So we stress, first of all that God works by means of laws, and that prayer is not an effort on the part of man to persuade God to break these laws or to perform miracles. Prayer is not our desire to establish a chaotic condition in the world by stopping the operation of God's laws, nor an attempt to inform God of a better way to manage His creation. Rousseau was right when he said that the power of prayer is limited by the laws of the physical world.

But this does not mean that there is less value in prayer than there was believed to be by our ancestors. As a matter of fact, we are merely beginning to realize the importance and the power of prayer. In ancient times men prayed, thinking their prayers would avert calamities by transforming an angry God into a propitious God. If the prayers could be said often enough, or turned around often enough on a wheel, they believed God's wrath might be appeased to some limited extent. They knew little about the laws of the world and less about the law of prayer, little about the universe and less about God. Now Christians do not pray, because they fear God, nor because they

consider all evil an evidence of His wrath, nor because they think He is a terrible deity seeking to punish them, nor because they desire to have God work miracles for their benefit, nor because they doubt the wisdom of God or His goodness.

The Christian idea of God is that God is an intelligent, loving spirit, who is best described by the term Father, when in that term we combine all the good and noble elements of the ideal parent; and the Christian idea of prayer is that it is the communion of the child of God with His Father. Prayer is fellowship with God. When one considers the prayers of Jesus and the times when He went apart to pray, he is impressed by the naturalness of prayer in Jesus' life and the reality of prayer. Jesus turned to God in the times of difficulty, in the face of crises, just as the normal boy of today, who has been made to feel that his father is his best friend, turns to his father. He went to God for advice and comfort. He went to God just to talk things over with Him. He went to God because there was no companionship which meant so much to Him. It was a joy to be with God and to carry on a conversation with Him, to tell Him everything, and then to listen to Him; to realize His sympathy and interest in all the affairs of His life, and to learn His will. So prayer to Jesus was communion with God, and the Christian idea of prayer must be the same as the idea in the mind of the founder of Christianity, that prayer is the fellowship of man with His loving Father.

The value of prayer, which follows from this conception, is three fold:

First, the benefit to the person who prays.

Second, the good which is accomplished for others.

Third, the joy and help given to God.

First, then, we consider the benefit of prayer to the person who prays. Modern science has made it easier to enter into communion with God, because it has eliminated some of the complexes which have rendered it difficult for men to understand how God could be reached by their words or thoughts. As we begin dimly to perceive how sound traverses the air in waves, and how thoughts are transferred without material media, perhaps on some similar waves, we find it comparatively simple to believe that God is able to understand our messages. He needs no amplifiers or receivers. His spiritual ear is attuned to receive our thought messages sent forth as prayers.

Many of the greatest psychologists of our day now maintain that thought transference is a demonstrated fact, a truth capable of scientific proof, and already proven. If spirit can speak with spirit on earth without material means of communication, then the Christian idea of prayer, which is the communication of man, a spirit, with God, a spirit, is not only a matter of faith, but supported by scientific discovery of truth. Man communes with His Father, and what is the result as far as the man is concerned? First, he grows like the Father with whom he associates. An old adage says, you can know a man by the company he keeps. Hawthorne made very clear that the man who looked constantly at the great stone face, admired it, loved it, and grew to resemble it. Psychologists have stressed this same truth and have scientifically explained how our impressions are sunk into our subconscious minds to mould our lives: how our ideals



tend to be realized; how the things we hear are not forgotten; how all our associates effect us. So if a man is in conscious fellowship with God, he will grow more like Him. He will begin to have God's point of view, to see things as God sees them. He will listen to God as well as talk to Him, and will come to understand God's will, God's sympathy, God's power and God's love. He will know better what he ought to do and will have received power to do it. He will see what is wrong or petty in his own life and try harder to overcome it. He will conquer the fears that have cursed his life and the worries that have drained his strength. He will face trials with tranquility, knowing God's power and constant helpfulness; he will triumph over sorrows because of the knowledge of God's goodness and love. He will have a real faith and the peace that passeth understanding, while at the same time he will be filled with a moral passion for usefulness which will make him a new man in his service to mankind. "Prayer opens the channels through which God reaches the human soul with guidance, comfort and quickening power." In all ages it has had indescribable value for the life of man, but it seems as if the personal value of prayer is even larger than ever in these days of haste and trouble, when man needs at times to shut out the distractions of the world, for it is by communion with God, that we come to know God and His love, ourselves and our possibilities, our fellow men and our duty to them, the problems of the world and their solution.

But not only has prayer such value for those who pray, making them more like God, it is also a great power by which good is accomplished for others. It

is a force in the world, operating by the will of God, a force as real as any other force, a law of God, with certain conditions determining its effectiveness. It has value for our homes, our communities, our world. It has power to break down prejudices, to remove barriers, to overcome the causes of industrial unrest and national conflicts. We may not be able to analyze it, any more than we can analyze electricity or gravitation, or the greater force of love, but as other forces are described by their results, so the effects of prayer have been seen through the ages and are as real as the effects of other forces. As yet we know less about it than we shall know, because we have not given enough time and thought to the study of spiritual laws, and only a few of the great economists and scientists have realized that the progress of civilization depends upon mental and spiritual law even more than on physical. Mr. Fosdick has pointed out, that God cannot build bridges without the cooperation of men, and that, just as there are things which God cannot accomplish if men will not use their minds and hands to assist Him, so there are things which God cannot bring about unless men use their higher spiritual powers to aid Him. Men must pray if they desire the coming of the Kingdom of God. The power of their prayers will produce results in righteousness and brotherly love.

If it is true, as so many psychologists assert, that our thoughts effect others, how much more must our prayers influence them and their lives, for at least prayers combine our thoughts and God's thoughts, at least our prayers not only mean that our attention is turned toward others, but that new channels are

opened through which God can express His love. For although it is true that God always wills what is good for all his children, yet some of that good is not realized because of the ignorance, the neglect, or the sin of men. As men know God's physical laws better and work with Him more, the happiness and welfare of man increase, so, as men know the laws of prayer better and use the power of prayer, God is able with this cooperation to improve the world and to hasten the triumph of love.

I must not take the time to dwell at length upon the laws of prayer, the conditions essential to the most effective prayer, but surely there are laws governing prayer, which we need to know if we would use this great force for the greatest good to ourselves and to the world. For example, if we are to pray most helpfully, there must be no hatred or bitterness in our hearts. Malice seems to break connections with God. We must concentrate our minds on God, and pray in the name of Christ, which, I take it, does not mean that we shall mechanically repeat the phrase "in the name of Jesus", but that we shall have the spirit which He had toward men and God, when we pray. As we develop our complete love for our brothers and our Father, we increase the power of our prayers. So prayer is not only of value to those who pray, but it is also a power which produces results in the world around us, and in the lives of others for whom prayers are offered. These results are in accord with the law and plan of God, and themselves depend upon certain conditions which we know to some extent. Prayer does not, therefore, contradict science, but like other forces needs to be studied, understood, and applied so

that the greatest good may be accomplished by harnessing and using it.

Finally, prayer brings joy to God and helps Him in His work of making the Kingdoms of this world into a Kingdom of brotherhood and love. It has no doubt pleased God to have men discover coal and how to use it, even as He planned; it has given Him pleasure that men have learned as much as they have about steam and electricity, and have increased the amount of human comfort and happiness by using these forces according to His laws and design. On the other hand it has brought grief and pain to Him, whenever the things or forces which He created have been used for selfish ends, whenever through ignorance, greed or lack of brotherly love, evil and suffering have been caused to men instead of good and happiness. In like manner it brings joy to God when the great power of prayer is used by His children to help Him in His great work of establishing here on earth a Kingdom of justice and love, and, may I say also, it brings joy to God from a personal standpoint.

Again just as the earthly Father delights to have his children come to him to talk things over with him, to tell him of the daily experiences and interests, to seek advice and help, so joy is brought to the heart of God when His children commune with him, and take time for periods of real fellowship with him.

The Christian idea of prayer is, therefore, a larger conception than that which has been held by any pre-Christian or non-Christian people because it is based on a higher conception of God and means the most intimate fellowship with Him. It includes all that was

noble in the older ideas of prayer, is in no way opposed to science but is supported by scientific discoveries and truth, and is of limitless value to the individual, to society and to God himself. If perchance you are one who has neglected the use of this great force, may you know even now, that though God loves you and all his children at all times, yet He can express His love differently when you turn to Him, and He sees your willingness to seek His advice and carry out His purposes for your life. May you learn to pray and thus discover one of the greatest of God's ways of giving to His children, peace, inspiration and power.

## THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF THE CHURCH

HAROLD COOPER

IN THAT DELIGHTFUL NOVEL "If Winter Comes" there is a significant conversation recorded between two of the characters.

"Hapgood, the remedy is the old remedy. The old God. But it is more than that. It's light—more light! The old revelation was good for the old world, but we want light, light! Do you suppose an age which knows wireless and can fly is going to find spiritual sustenance in the food of an age which thought thunder was God speaking? Man's done with it. It means nothing to him; it gives nothing to him. "Man cannot live by bread alone" say the churches, but he says "I am living on bread alone and doing well on it." But I tell you, Hapgood, that plumb down in the crypt and abyss of every man's soul is a hunger for other food than this earthly stuff. And the churches know it. And instead of reaching down to him what he wants—light, light—instead of that they invite him to dancing and to picture shows, and you're a jolly good fellow, and religion is a jolly fine thing and no spoil-sport, and all that sort of latter-day tendency. He can get all of that outside the church and get it better. Light, light,—he wants light, Hapgood. And the padres come down and drink beer with him, and watch boxing matches with him, and sing music hall songs with him, and dance jazz with him, and call it "making religion a living thing." And there is no God there that a man can understand to be lifted up to. Hapgood, a man wouldn't

care what he had to give up if he knew he was making for something inestimably precious. But he doesn't know. Light, Light—that's what he wants. And the longer it is withheld the lower he will sink. Light—light! Who can—who will—give us light?"

Now this is a criticism worth thinking about in any discussion of the "Christian idea of the church." It raises the question as to what the church is and what Jesus meant for His disciples to accomplish.

Another cry of protest is found in "Painted Windows"—that severe criticism of English Christianity by the author of "Mirrors of Downing Street". The author is describing Father Knox, who has left the Anglican Church and gone over to the church of Rome. This Father Knox has written a book and of it the critic says:

"One is never conscious, not for a single moment that Father Knox is writing about Jesus of Nazareth, Gethsemane, Calvary. About a Church; yes; about ceremonials, about mysterious rites, about prayers to the Virgin Mary, about authority and about Bishops. Yes, indeed! But about Christ's transvaluation of values; about His secret; about His religion of the pure heart and childlike spirit—*not one single glimpse.*"

So first of all in discussing the Christian idea of the Church let us approach it from the negative side and state:

*First of all: The church is not a fire escape. It is not a sort of insurance which guarantees future bliss in*

some other world. Do not misunderstand me. I am not denying that in Christ we have the assurance of immortal bliss. That is too great a truth to be denied. But I would ask: Is the church merely a ladder from earth to heaven? Can you imagine anything more selfish than that? Can you think of anything more foreign to the spirit of Christ than that? How different that is to the example of Jesus. He ministered to the poor. He healed the sick. He touched the leper. And when he sent out His disciples He sent them to be good Samaritans to needy travellers. No! the church is not a fire escape, or a heavenly insurance company even though thousands around us seem to think it is.

*Secondly: The Christian view does not limit the church by the bounds of any denomination. Sectarianism is not even a by-product of the Christian spirit. It is a parasite which has hindered the growth of the true church of Christ. Christianity is a living thing far too vigorous to remain within the shell of a local sect. How amazing it must be to the Master to see His disciples organized into such a variety of groups. Even the heathens smile at those fifty-seven varieties of Christianity when presented to them on the foreign field. No! The Christian idea of the church does not limit it to any denomination.*

*Thirdly: The Christian idea of the church is not that of a system or a ritual. Rather is it a spirit. This complex and highly organized Christianity of the Twentieth Century seems far removed from the atmosphere of the New Testament and the Gospels. Father Knox may build up his system in the Romish Church but as for me and my house we will find consolation in*



the simple spirit of the Master as revealed in the Gospels.

WHAT, THEN, IS THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF  
THE CHURCH?

First: *The Church is a brotherhood of men who believe in soul values* expressed in service to others. That these soul values may be realized and this service made effective they have organized. Out of this organization has arisen the finest fellowship the world has ever known. The emphasis of the Occident has been, and still is, a material emphasis. Houses and lands. Diamonds and automobiles. These be thy Gods, O Israel. Again and again modern psychology has called us to realize that the real values are soul values. Even the church has caught the prevailing spirit of the age. Numbers and organization. Numbers and organization. These be thy Gods, O Israel. But Jesus taught us that the greatest impulses of life are soul impulses. And the church is a brotherhood of men who realize these values of the spirit. To conserve that spirit organization is necessary. But only as secondary, not of primary importance. Read your gospels. Study the Sermon on the Mount. Can you find anywhere else such emphasis on spiritual values? People tell us that we need the gospel of India in America today. Bring the Swamis, or Hindu teachers from that land of mysticism and meditation. Let the best of Hinduism be accepted. But listen to me, there is nothing in their spiritual emphasis which cannot be found in Christ's teachings. And when you have found the best that the Orient has to offer, you will find a great deal in addition in the Sermon on the Mount.

“Perceiv’st thou not the change of day?  
Ah! carry back thy ken.  
What, some two thousand years. Survey  
The world as it was then.

Like ours it looked in outward air;  
Its head was clear and true;  
Sumptuous its clothing, rich its fare,  
No pause its action knew.

On that hard Pagan world disgust  
And secret loathing fell  
Deep weariness and sated lust  
Made human life a hell.

In his cool hall, with haggard eyes  
The Roman noble lay;  
He drove abroad in furious guise  
Along the Appian way.

He made a feast, drank fierce and fast  
And crowned his hair with flowers—  
No easier nor no quicker passed  
The impracticable hours.

The brooding East with awe beheld  
Her impious younger world.  
The Roman tempest swelled and swelled  
And on her head was hurled.

The East bowed low before the blast  
In patient, deep disdain;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.

So well she mused, a morning broke  
Across her spirit gray;  
A conquering new-born joy awoke  
And filled her life with day.

“Poor world,” she cried, “so deep accurst  
That run’st from pole to pole,  
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst,  
Go. Seek *it in thy soul!*”

Second:

*The church is a brotherhood of servants*

George Eliot created the character of Felix Holt, the radical, who took up his parable against the churches and parsons saying: "The aristocrats supply us with our religion like anything else and get a profit on it. They'll give us plenty of heaven. We may have land there. But we will offer to change with them. We will give them back some of the heaven and take it out in something for us and our children in this world." Felix Holt was a radical when he uttered that word forty years ago. But would he be counted a radical today? Hardly! We have come to see how revolutionary the teachings of Jesus are. Listen: "I am among you as one that serveth." His disciples are simply those who are banded together as a brotherhood of servants. There was no mistaking what Jesus meant. Call to mind that scene in the upper room when Jesus rose from supper and girded Himself. Taking a towel and basin He commenced to wash the disciples' feet. Listen to His words: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given unto you an example." No literal interpretation touches the truth of this incident. Here is a Matterhorn of truth in the doings and teachings of our Lord. We are servants of society. That is what discipleship means.

Let me make a comparison between the Hon. G. K. Gokhale, a Hindu of Poona, India, and an Ohio man who shall be nameless. Mr. Gokhale is the founder of the "Servants of India Society." Its members are uni-

versity graduates who follow their leader in serving society. For this service they receive about ten to seventeen dollars a month. Just enough to keep body and soul together. Wherever there is need, there they go. Is there a famine somewhere? There you will find the members of the "Servants of India Society." Even the Mahatma Gandhi has signified his intention of working under this organization.

Now let us look at our Ohio friend. His chief object in life is to make money and he has succeeded very well. He believes that the world is going to wind up soon in a great and glorious catastrophe, and he shouts "Praise the Lord." Why not? Isn't he going to wear a starry crown and walk on streets of gold. He likes to tickle his hands with gold here, but just think of walking on it. It greatly worries him because he thinks that we ministers are not preaching the gospel. But not one thing does he do in service for others. He has bled the community for self, but never put anything back into it either in money or service. Selfish—as selfish as the devil. Is there suffering around him? He knows it not. His eyes are blinded to sorrow by the light of this glorious catastrophe which is to happen. The tragedy of it does not matter to him. That is incidental. People are going to get what is coming to them. And he banishes that side of it with a wave of the hand.

Which of these two men have realized the teachings of Christ? Methinks that the Hindu is nearer the Kingdom of God than our Ohio friend. And that is the Christian idea of the Church. The Church is a brotherhood of servants which could be called the "Servants of Jesus Society."

## Third:

*The church is a creator of moral standards*

Take the world situation in politics today into your mind's eye. Look at that conference at Genoa. Remember the meeting of the political leaders at Versailles. Recall our Washington conference. We will forget for a while the comment of Harold Begbie in "Painted Windows"—when he says: "The successors of the Apostle Paul are not at the Washington Conference, they are too busy organizing whist drives and opening bazaars." Look rather at the blending of idealism and realism in those international conferences. See how selfishness and greed rise demanding utterance. Watch France as she demands—what? What is she trying to do? See on the other hand the figure of Secretary Hughes making that astounding proposal for the reduction of navies. Out of all this there comes the impression of good and evil forces fighting for supremacy. One day we think idealism will win, the next day we see selfishness in the saddle. Chief Justice Wang of China has said:

"Nations have been accustomed to deal with one another in a manner in which no decent man dares to deal with his neighbors. Extortion on the part of an individual is illegal and immoral, but as between nations it is dignified by the Latin word ultimatum. It seems futile for us to wish for peace, if nations are not prepared to raise the standard for morality in international relations. So long as nations remain morally unreformed, so long there will be wars and human suffering. \* \* \* It appears to me that by promoting a closer bond of international fellowship many causes

for friction and misunderstanding can be removed.”

(From an address on December 18, 1921. The speaker was a Chinese delegate to the Washington Conference.)

The Near East is like a human chess board. The pawns are Armenians and Greeks. The Turk plays the game and orders each move while European powers occupy the galleries as spectators and speculators—each one jealous of the other. The tragedy of the game is that if the Christian minorities of Asia Minor do not play the game they are consigned to the bottomless pit of massacre.

Has not the Church of Christ the privilege of creating a moral atmosphere in which it will be impossible for such selfishness to abound? Apply the same principle to national, state, and local politics. If the church does not voice its protest against graft, who will? This is not a question of partisan politics at all. It is the question of creating moral standards, so that lower standards of political life shall hide ashamed and afraid.

The same is true in relation to industry. Our hearts were recently cheered by Fosdick's noble utterance. "The ministry is not for sale." No, before high heaven it is not, even though the manufacturers of Pittsburgh do withdraw their subscriptions. Thy money perish with thee. The Christian idea of the Church demands that human values be exalted far above property values. Has the church not the right to voice its ideals in the midst of a steel strike or a coal strike? The church is a creator of moral standards in industry. If not, then African slavery will have been supplanted by modern industrial slavery.

One of the humorous things of life is to be found in the common charge that these social teachings are not found in the Bible. A man says to me: "I believe in the Bible" and by that means to infer that the Bible is opposed to the social application of the gospel. Listen! The Bible is the greatest advocate of social justice in the world today. The old prophets of Israel would never dare to return to America. They would be arrested for teaching Bolshevism. They were not Bolsheviks, but many a man who is teaching similar ideas is charged with being in league with the disturbers of society in Russia.

Micah was one of these Old Testament prophets. He says: "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds and when the morning cometh they practice it, because it is in the power of their hands. And they covet fields and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away. So they oppress a man and his house." That is a graphic picture.

In another place the same prophet charges the same group with being ready to pluck the skin off the bones of the poor. You have heard the expression, "He is a skinflint. He will skin you alive." That comes from the Bible. The exact quotation is as follows: "Who pluck off their skin from them, and the flesh of my people; and they break their bones and chop them in pieces." If any one tells you that the Bible is not interested in working conditions and wages ask them to read what Micah has to say on that subject.

Micah was not alone; Zacchariah is just as emphatic a preacher of social justice. "Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying: 'Execute true judgment and show

mercy and compassion every man to his brother. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother." Amos cries out: "They sold the righteous for a piece of silver and the poor for a pair of shoes. They pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor."

These are not isolated texts wrested from the context. Not at all. All the minor prophets speak in this strain and some of the major prophets also. Sit down and read these parts of the Bible. You will think that the prophets are pleading for a minimum wage for women. The sweat shop cannot live in the atmosphere of the Bible. That book is our charter of liberty. Industrial slavery cannot stand the light of the Bible. The Bible is the book of social justice.

There is no department of life for which the brotherhood of servants may not create moral standards. The problem of the movies and the problem of the breakdown of home life are of intense interest to those who have enlisted in this great brotherhood. "Preach the gospel and let industry and politics, and movies, and marriage and divorce alone," cries the obscurantist. And I answer back, that is the gospel. If not, take the ordination papers which you gave me when I entered the ministry of Christ. You have made them only a scrap of paper. But that is not necessary, for the work of the Christ and His church is infinitely greater than some people would have us believe. It is the work of creating standards which are applicable to every department of life.



Fourth:

*The church is a brotherhood*

This has been hinted at but let me now emphasize it more fully. Do you know of any fellowship quite so large and real as this? The world is full of organizations of every sort and kind. The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries will go down in history as the organization time in human history. Stop the average man on the street and ask him as to his fellowships. What does he say? "Yes, I am a Mason and an Odd Fellow." Any other order? "Well, there is the Loyal Order of Moose and the Elks and I am thinking of joining the Noble Order of Elephants." Do you belong to any business organization? "Yes, on Tuesday I go to the Exchange Club, on Friday to the Chamber of Commerce and on Wednesday to the Civitans, and at present they are voting on my name in the Optimist Club, and I am thinking of joining the Lions." Is that all? "Yes, I think it is. No, I have my membership in the Athletic Club and the Y. M. C. A." Does your wife belong to any fellowship organizations? "Does she? Say, man, I am pretty nearly clubbed to death."

But listen to me! In spite of all these organizations I want to state that the greatest fellowship and brotherhood of them all is the Church of Jesus Christ. Now let me bring the facts to support that assertion.

Fact No. 1. Christianity knows no race division. It is for all colors of men. Black, red, yellow, brown and white.

Fact No. 2. It knows no geographical limitation. It finds a home in America, but it also finds a home in China, Japan, India, Europe and the islands of the sea.

Fact No. 3. It is for the rich as well as the poor, and for those who are between the two.

Fact No. 4. It is for the educated and for those who have not seen the inside of a school. It is for the good and it is for the bad. The saint and the sinner. It is for time and it is for eternity. It is for the child and the adult. It is for the man and the woman. All sorts and conditions of men. It is for humanity. Knock and the door shall be opened. No secret password here. Come unto Me all that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. All other fellowships are small in comparison with the fellowship of men in Jesus Christ. It fulfills the law of association. Men must associate with each other. Capital organizes. Labor organizes. Business organizes. There is a common instinct which drives us together. And towering above all these organizations is the Church of Jesus Christ. Not as a gymnasium for the calisthenics of the soul. We cannot be religious alone. No, it is a brotherhood founded by Him, who was a brother to poor fallen humanity.

Fifth:

*The church is a kingdom*

How often did our Master speak of this kingdom. Thy kingdom come. The kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. If he saw birds and flowers they were suggestions to his mind of the kingdom—children in the market place; all sorts and conditions of men caused Him to speak of this kingdom. It was the uppermost thought in His mind. The church of this century must follow her Master in this also. We are to realize the kingdom of God on earth.

No! The church is not a fire escape—nor is it a system or ritual. It is not any sect or denomination. But it is a brotherhood of men with spiritual impulses. It is a brotherhood of servants. This brotherhood is not a beggar in human society but a creator of moral standards. Standards which shall govern politics both national and international. Standards which shall affect industry in steel strikes and coal strikes.

The church is a brotherhood which for fellowship is unequalled. It is bringing the kingdom of God on earth. This brotherhood is united in one great leader our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;

Elect from every nation,  
Yet one o'er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation  
One Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy name she blesses,  
Partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses,  
With every grace imbued.

'Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace forevermore;  
Till with the vision glorious  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great church victorious  
Shall be the church at rest.

## THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS WORLD — INTERNATIONALISM

OLIVER C. WEIST

WHEN WE KNOW what a Christian's attitude is toward this present world, we know something of his brand of Christianity.

Some have said this world is evil, therefore flee from it, renounce it. And to save their souls devout men have made their beds in the desert, or entered monastic walls.

Others say this world is hopelessly corrupt, that it is going to the dogs; but any attempt on the part of Christian people to stop it is dubbed as "mere humanitarianism", flaunting God in the face and an evidence of lack of faith in His word. "Things must get worse before they can get better", they say. "Christ is coming again to judge among the nations. Then, by this miraculous intervention, all wrongs will be righted". Rather interesting indeed, were it not so pitiful and dangerous—this permillanarian view.

Closely akin to this is the attitude expressed by the old songs we used to sing: "I am a Pilgrim and a Stranger", "Heaven is My Home". We are on our way, but we do happen to know where we are going. Yet the way is through a strange land. But the pilgrim or stranger never feels any great responsibility for the condition of the country through which he travels. He is glad to do what good he can as he sojourns, but it is all "by the way".

I say there has been a great tendency among Chris-

tians, feeling that Christianity and the world are irreconcilable, to give up the world. On the other hand, for the same reason, others have clung tenaciously to the world. We have here then two extremes. Both agree that Christianity and this present world are set over against each other, that they cannot be reconciled. Tolstoi, speaking for the one extreme, says "Give up the world". Nietzsche, spokesman for the second, says "Give up Christianity". It has been pointed out that both agree in another thing—"both leave the world untouched by the power of Christianity". It would make me very uncomfortable were I a premillanarian to see what company I had to keep in holding such a doctrine.

Now we believe that there is a "more excellent way". There is a mean between these extremes. We are not forced to choose between these two horns of this dilemma. There is a more wholesome attitude and this is expressed in our general subject: "The Christian in His World"—in the world, not fleeing from it; on a mission and not on a holiday trip; and that mission not to save one's self, but to save the world.

Now it is not hard to see the effect this "otherworldly" idea has had upon the Bible. It makes a great difference from what angle or background you approach any book, particularly the Bible. And it is plain to be seen that approaching even the New Testament from this "otherworldly" viewpoint much of it has been rendered obsolete and impractical. For instance, the Book of Revelation is as little read today as is Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress. Why? Because we have been taught to think of this as a description of

the life beyond, when in reality the writer was picturing, in a unique way, what this present world of ours will be like when Jesus Christ comes into His own, Lord and Master of society as well as of individuals.

And in the Gospels Jesus was constantly talking about the "here and now." "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly". "Ye are the salt of the earth". This is not my comparison but His. Now salt usually makes a difference, unless it has been stored somewhere with the lid off. But salt is not for storage; it is to mingle with, flavor and preserve that with which it comes in contact. To this Jesus compares a Christian. He is not for storage, or to be set apart, but to be mixed up—mixed up with the life of this world. And the world today is, in truth, a mess that sorely needs this mixing and Christian flavoring.

I think if you search for a reason for this transferring of portions of the Scriptures to celestial realms and why also some are waiting for the Second Coming and wanting a comfortable gospel while they wait, you will find it frequently in the desire to escape the duty and obligation of this mixing up process. Little wonder indeed that some prefer the "good old gospel". But what people want should in no wise be allowed to alter the New Testament, or render it null and void. The duty of social redemption cannot be read out of the New Testament in such an easy manner.

And if this redemption is to be complete, and if even the individual is to be completely saved, it means that Jesus is to be indeed the Saviour of the world, which must include all our life from top to bottom. Jesus

came to save a world, which means our social, our commercial and industrial life, our family, state and national life. It takes all of these things to make a world. If I say I am completely saved when my home is not thoroughly Christian, I deceive myself. But how can my home be thoroughly Christian if my city is dominated by Tammany politics and principles? And if my state is under the rule of Beelzebub, what chances are there for my city? And if the state is corrupt, how shall the nation escape? "No man liveth to himself". You see where this leads. The process cannot stop at the frontiers. Borders simply cannot bound. This is inevitable—a man can never be wholly Christian, something will be lacking, and so on up the line, until Christ the Saviour of the world reigns supreme in the affairs of the nations.

For emphasis, let us repeat, as Christians we are not forced to choose between these two extremes. Who would not much more prefer our own Lincoln to either Tolstoi or Nietzsche? One does not wonder that almost every sect of Christians has looked upon Lincoln as the great Christian and would claim him for its own. He is so sane, so wholesomely Christian. Where is expressed a more Christian attitude toward this present world with all its faults and short-comings than those immortal words: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive onward to finish the work in which we are engaged, to do all that may achieve a just and lasting peace among (notice) among all the nations." There is no intimation here of "watchful waiting", no hint here of the couch or of

folded hands. Lincoln was a true Christian and as such an internationalist.

Now the strange thing is that some Christians have quoted their Bible to justify a selfish, unchristian, narrow, nationalistic spirit. Of course we know the great cause of selfish jingoism is usually to be found in the economic life of the people, particularly with the nation that has interests. But the discouraging thing is to see anyone go to the Scriptures to support a narrow position or seek there for authority to carry out some selfish design.

But if the Bible is all on the same level, as some say, equally authoritative, then I have no choice but to believe in selfish nationalism. I turn to the Old Testament and there it is plain as day. Irvin Bachellor says that much of the Old Testament "reads like a report of a German General Staff." God had a favorite people, and the people themselves admitted it. Being a chosen people; they at times chose to appropriate other people's property; they did not hesitate to begin wars of conquest or of extermination; nor did they deem it necessary to even relieve their consciences by publishing "Blue Books" or "Red Books". They stopped at nothing if it promised to add something to their "beloved Israel"; they loved to dream of a time when all their enemies would be "dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel", and even little children would be brained against stone walls.

But fortunately all is not on the same level even in the Old Testament. Little by little we see growing up by the side of this nationalistic spirit another, a larger, nobler spirit, protesting against the first. Ezra



and Nehemiah believed in "Israel first"; but the Book of Ruth takes a despised foreigner as its heroine, and moves on a beautiful plane of human brotherhood. Even Luther in his day was so much of a Higher Critic as to call the Book of Esther a "heathen book;" but over against this nationalism can be placed that wonderful Book of Jonah, with its superb internationalism fairly blossoming like a—gourd.

Yes, as that race grew in wisdom and in greater favor with God, we find the true prophets protesting against the narrow nationalistic spirit of the older days, saying that the chosen nation is and can only be the righteous nation. God is the God of the Hebrews, but on one condition—that the people be righteous. At all times he demands justice and mercy and that men walk humbly with their God.

But more surprising still is the fact that men have tried to justify their own narrow spirit by appealing to the New Testament. They attribute this even to Jesus Himself. "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." He said to His disciples, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans". They say He made only a few attacks upon the social abuses of His day, and when it came to the broader relations He was extremely vague. One of the few instances where He seems to give advice concerning governmental affairs is where He says, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's". But here, they say, He was a great side-stepper, for the question still remains, "What are the things of Caesar and what are the things of God?"

Well, the whole trouble has arisen out of the peculiar way we have of dealing with the Scriptures; our proof-text method is chiefly to blame. We have quoted texts at random to prove our point. But Christ is the Light of the World, even as He said, and somehow we are allowing that light to shine even upon His own words, and we are beginning to see the way. I mean this: you can quote Jesus on both sides of the question of war, for instance. Yet who is in doubt as to Christ's attitude toward this even in our day, when he faces it in the light of all that we know about the great Nazarene—His life, His words, ideals, personality, spirit.

Men once justified slavery by the proof-text method or scriptural silences. But slavery had to go, nor could even Scriptural quotations save it. It had to go because years ago there was released a power that it could not withstand—the love of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men. Today we are seeing that same power operate against war, and one does not need to be a prophet, or a son of a prophet, to say that war will follow slavery to the scrap-heap. It is inevitable, for when Jesus set forth that great kingdom idea—the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, He sounded the death knell of war and all things like it. More than that, he made internationalism as certain as the fact that day follows the night.

Jesus was supremely interested in the Kingdom. You would not think so if you consulted the old historic creeds or many moth-eaten sermons of the past. But even when the Kingdom was mentioned, it was invariably translated to celestial realms and turned

men's minds toward the skies. But Jesus was interested in the Kingdom on earth. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth". It seems strange that all through these years the literalist has not taken these words literally. He seems to have been a literalist only when it suited best. Jesus was interested in the rule of God here and now—the rule of love and peace, justice, righteousness, goodwill. He spent His whole life breaking down the walls that separate God's people. He gave His life for the Kingdom of God on earth.

While it is true that the Master gives no specific rules about international relations, yet the true Christian who would seek the truth cannot escape His teachings on this great subject. And if we are Christians we cannot but share His interest in the Kingdom of God. We may not agree upon such questions as the virgin birth, (indeed it makes very little difference), but we must agree upon the Kingdom of God as the dominant note of Christ's teaching. The first, Jesus never mentions; the other, He seldom fails to mention. But if we believe in that Kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven", then we cannot escape a belief in Christian internationalism, and pray for a time when all of the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

Today our papers are filled with large black headlines. Germany and Russia have spilled the fat in the fire at the very beginning of the Genoa Conference, and somehow the flare-up has been noticed on this side of the waters. Why is it that we are so interested, and that the news fills us with fear and dread? One of our fears, of course, is that the work of our own

Washington Conference, our own particular foster child, will be undone unless things take a decided turn in Europe. "While we assure ourselves that there is no economic peril in the Russian and German compact, yet, nevertheless, we are reminded that it is an alliance of hatred, and as such contains great political peril". But what Christian man today is in doubt as to the real cause of the whole trouble? Who doubts that the underlying cause today dates back to yesterday—yesterday at Versailles when Jesus was not invited to sit at the Peace Table, and when the Christian method of the treatment of a criminal was spurned by the nations of the world as impracticable?

Jesus said "I am the way", but the allies have tried another way. "When yellow fever was a regular summer visitor to our southern ports", says a noted Quaker, "men tried to prevent the spread of that great disease by the means of a shotgun quarantine. Boats coming up the Mississippi were met by a posse of armed men at every wharf who refused to let them land. These were horrible cases forced on from wharf until the boat ran ashore unmanned. The shotgun quarantine was no more effective in that day than in our day. The fever usually got in and ravaged the South in spite of the quarantine. But when Cuba happened to come into our possession, the shotgun quarantine was out of the question. And our noble Waring and a group of martyrs in the medical corps cleaned up Havana, discovered the cause of the spread of the yellow fever, and not only saved Havana and Panama, but made us all far more secure."

How like this shotgun quarantine is the method of the allies! Is it any wonder that we are fearing and

dreading certain political diseases today? And when shall we understand that the policy of Christian helpfulness, removing the possible causes of disease, war and unrest in other nations, lessening of hatred, suspicion and greed of others toward us, will not only make us more secure from danger, but will save the world? When shall we really believe that "in none other is there salvation, for neither is there any other name under Heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved"?

And what can a Christian say concerning our own national policy, particularly as he looks at it with the mind of Christ? There is a picture in the Old Testament of a righteous man, but it is far from the New Testament idea of righteousness. Noah, it says, was saved because he was righteous. He builds an ark and into safety takes his wife, their sons, and their wives, twice four and no more—and then he shuts the door. But no one believes today in arks of safety, unless he happens to get into the United States Senate. The righteous man or nation cannot go apart and build for his own safety. The righteous man, unlike Noah, is going to show some very real concern for those who are caught in the seething whirlpool of life. The righteous man or nation is the one that is willing to lose his life that he might save it.

The other day in a noted speech before a certain club, an aspirant to a seat in the United States Senate said that the main question before the world peace was an economic question. He was interrupted by a minister who asked if he did not also think that it was an ethical question. His reply was that he

would leave the ethical questions to the ministers. This man also said that he wished Europe well, and he hoped she might prosper, but further than that it was none of our concern. He is willing to loan money to Europe, "but not one dollar to come into competition with American trade." Yet this is the man who asks the vote of the Christian people of America. Was there ever a better example of the Main Street mind?

America of all nations ought to lead in this Christian internationalism. We have had a noble history. We should have learned much from our past. We should have learned from experience that Christ's way is the only way to live peacefully together as nations. In a small way we have tried it. We made Japan our friend by Perry's mission of peace. We made another great friend in the Orient. And it cost us but the price of a fourth-rate battleship. China and Japan will ever remain our friends unless we ourselves violate that friendship and encroach upon their rightful interests.

The Christian Church through her missionary movement has been a valuable aid in developing this international mind. Particularly has the Church done much to create good friendship abroad. But in recent years we have come to learn that the missionaries cannot do what ought to be done in these countries unless they are backed up by Christian statesmanship here at home. Every missionary that we hear speak is bitterly criticising this narrow, nationalistic spirit, that is so prevalent at home today.

On our southern border there is a country in dire need. What have we offered her? We have allowed

our capitalists to exploit her. Our corporations have taken over some of her wells and mines, and we have grown richer and richer through her silver, and gold, and copper. In return we have offered very little indeed. The result is that Mexico at times has become a thorn in our flesh. Now and then, we have had to send soldiers to the border with the hope of removing the thorn. But because we failed to send a Christian army with ideals, we have had to send an army of soldiers into her country, which cost a hundred and seventy-seven thousand dollars a day—twice as much as the church has spent in one year in missionary work there. The shame of it all! As a Christian nation we are forced to slaughter these people because we fail to send that which makes for peace—a knowledge of Christian principles and life. Isn't it about time for Christian people in America to speak, to insist upon placing a Secretary of Peace in the President's Cabinet, if not supplanting, certainly alongside of the Secretary of War? We are so ready to defend our rights and protect our property and privileges! We have all the machinery ready to defend, but practically no machinery set up that will supply the needs of others or make for peace. We still send soldiers into other countries to do peace duty. If statesmen are going to leave to others not in office all ethical and Christian questions, then, in the Name of God, as Christians let us see to it that such men are not elected.

Perhaps one reason Christian internationalism has not gripped the thought of our people more than it has, is because of those who have advocated it. The best way to teach or preach Christianity is to live it.

Has the Christian Church lived this Kingdom spirit before the state? By what right can the present church preach to the state or the nations? Can the Christian Church preach to the nation and still practice old world politics? There are many good reasons why I should quote someone else on this subject. I bring you the words of a Presbyterian, Dr. William Pierson Merrill: "If the Church attempts to teach or preach the need of international order, of the subordinating of irresponsible nationalism to the general welfare of humanity, the nations can retort in the words of Paul, 'Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?' If we cannot get Presbyterians and Methodists and Baptists and Episcopalians together, how can we expect great states to form federative unions, or correlate their political functions? The Church must either be silent on this great matter, the greatest moral question of the age, or must set her own house in order, so that she can speak peace to the nations in the Name of God with a united voice."

Finally, the Church must have faith. Suppose we have failed in this our first attempt at national family living, nevertheless, the idea is right and right must live. "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." Men may kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. It was not an easy thing in the days of our Revolutionary Fathers for them to disarm against each other and to form that constitutional covenant "to provide for the common defense and to promote the general welfare". And because it is more of a task in our day than in the days of our fathers, there is all the more reason



that we should put forth every effort, every reason why we should rise to meet the challenge.

Following then the example of our fathers who lived in their world, who did not flee from it, who accepted the challenge of the hour, who attempted the impossible in their day, let us pray and test our spirit by that prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven".

#### "BOOKS"

- "Do We Want War In The Far East"? Fosdick.  
"Is Christianity Practicable?" Brown, (Scribners).  
"Christian Internationalism", Merrill, (McMillan).  
"Europe, Whither Bound?" Graham, (Appleton).  
"The New Social Order", Ward, (McMillan).

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01251 1046



